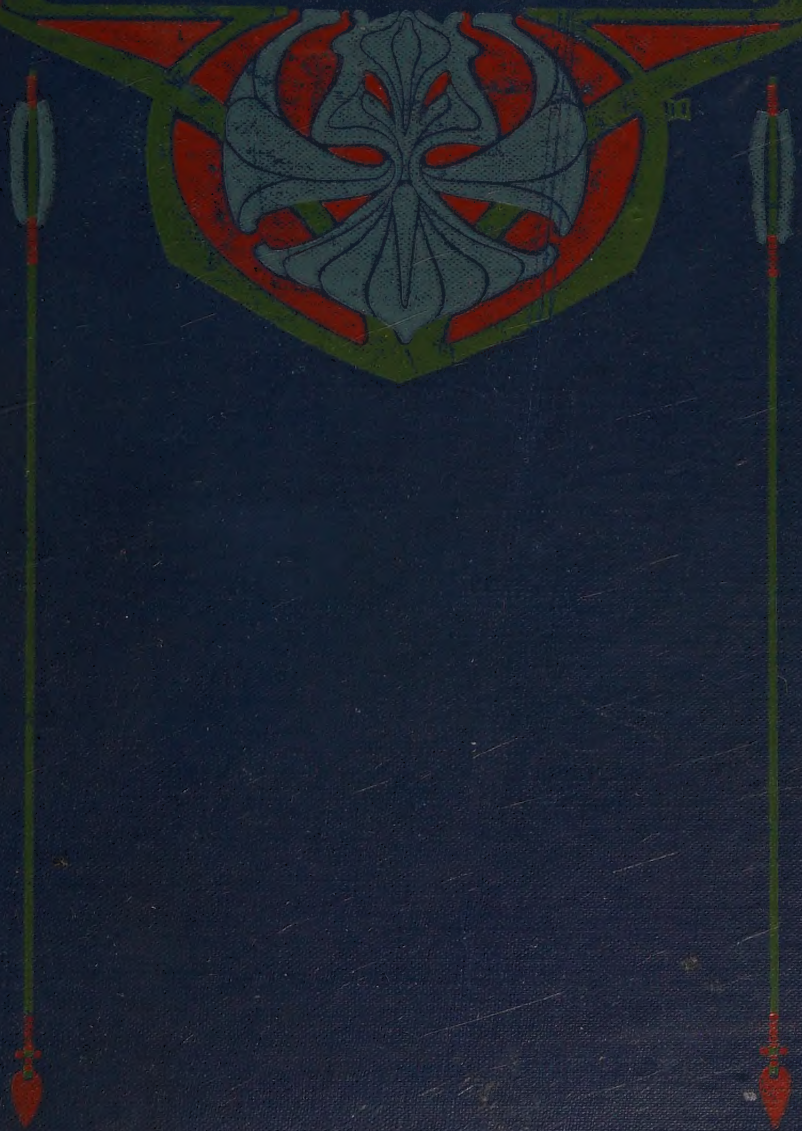
# A ROSE of NORMANDY

W. R. A. WILSON



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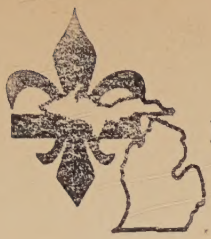

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# A Rose of Normandy

# A Rose *of* Normandy

By

William R. A. Wilson

*Illustrated by Ch. Grunwald*

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To the Memory

OF ONE

WHO GAVE ME IN UNSTINTED MEASURE THE PRICELESS BLESSING OF HER LOVE;

OF ONE

WHO WAS THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND;

OF ONE

WHO WAS ALTOGETHER LOVELY—

My Mother.

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# A Rose of Normandy

## Chapter One

### IN WHICH A PRISONER ESCAPES AND A SOLILOQUY IS INTERRUPTED

THE sun shone fair in France one bright June day in the year of our Lord 1678, and the thirty-fifth of the reign of that Louis whom men called "Great." And nowhere was the sunlight fairer than in the capital city, where the presence of a conquering and pleasure-loving monarch and his bewildering court attracted the bravest and gayest of all Europe.

The streets of Paris resounded on the self-same day to the prancing and pawing of war-horses, the gay *fanfare* of trumpets announcing the return of a victorious General from the Netherlands, or the rumbling of the great coach of state as the King himself hurried on to take part in some fantastic dance or ballet at the Palace, stopping, perchance, at the cathedral door to offer thanks with all true loyal subjects and join in

some great "Te Deum" sung in honor of another battle won.

The Council of State at their sovereign's command voted millions for the prosecution of the foreign war and tens of millions for the erection of another marvellous palace or château, with equal interest or indifference. The industries of war and peace alike were quickened. With similar zeal did the factories turn out their quota of swords and guns, cannon and ball, or lace of the fairest, silks of gossamer texture and daintiest hue, and tapestries almost beyond price. Men left obscure provincial birthplaces to appear suddenly upon the court horizon as royal favorites and bask in that uncertain sunshine, whilst other men, equally unknown, left home and fireside to go into foreign lands to fight for their King and the extension of his realm; still others stayed behind and toiled, extorting from the soil the heavy taxes that the Minister of Finance wrested from them in turn.

Amidst such confusion the ordinary affairs of life and State went on as though naught but the humdrum plans of a peaceful nation were afoot. People lived and died a natural death (occasionally); they ate, drank, and slept through it all. The dead were buried and the living blest, much the same as they had been since first the church spire and the dark-robed priest had superseded

the old savage faiths. Even the millstones of Justice (that is to say, the King) ground silently and with their accustomed fineness, while the axe, the rope, and the wheel did their kind work in sending prisoners of State to a country where *lettres de cachet* were unknown.

His Most Christian Majesty believed in the deterrent effect the sight of the final act in the drama of a criminal's life had upon all good citizens. He likewise wished at times that his people, even those of the lower classes, should be amused. Accordingly he achieved these two ends by frequent public executions in the Place de la Grêve. This, being a commodious square hard by the Pont Notre Dame, was well adapted to a large audience, while the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville at its southern end afforded an excellent pedestal on which the King and the beauties and gallants of his court could show themselves whenever an execution of especial importance took place.

On the day with which this narrative opens the morning had worn away until the sun with vertical rays beat down upon the heads of the spectators. There had been three instructive and successful executions thus far. The first wretch was broken on the wheel, the second hanged, and the third torn to pieces by horses. The King and court party in the gallery had departed after

repeated half-suppressed expressions of *ennui* at the end of this third act, and there remained but one poor devil of a nameless fellow to be dispatched by the knife.

A raised platform occupied the centre of the square. About it was drawn up a double line of soldiers, some armed with halberds, others with muskets, who kept the people from crowding too near. From the scaffold a narrow lane was kept open by a company of archers to a cart, on which the condemned had ridden to the scene of their execution, and on which they awaited in silence their turn. Every other available inch was occupied by a dense mass of perspiring, jostling humanity, who good-humoredly enjoyed the scene, despite the heat and press. The windows of all the houses fronting on the square were filled with spectators, while the doors of the shops and *cabarets* were blocked with benches, on which tiptoed the curious and interested customers and shopkeepers.

The waits occasioned by the removal of the still palpitating remains of each criminal and the preparation for the next were enlivened by jests passed between the people and the soldiery. Occasionally a joker would carry his merriment too far, as when he cut off some lace or trimming from the coat of one of the guards; then he and his neighbors would receive a halberd crashing

against their heads, or its handle pushed against their ribs, with no playful force.

It was to be noticed by a careful observer that neither pity nor concern was anywhere manifested for the three already executed, even though one was of comparatively high rank. He had, in the collection of the taxes, made the fatal mistake of trying to cheat the King as well as the commons. But as the preparations went on for the dispatch of the fourth and last, an uneasy feeling spread about among the throng. Although few knew accurately his crime or even name, yet many felt him entitled to their sympathy because he was not a noble whom they could admire for his magnificence and hate for his selfish arrogance, but one of themselves, a man of the people, who for some unknown cause had incurred the displeasure of the King or one of his creatures.

On the outskirts of the crowd, not far from the cart on which the remaining unfortunate sat, stood a small group of spectators conversing in tones so low that the near-by soldiers could not hear them.

"What think you, friend Picon," said a muscular fish-wife to a swarthy butcher fresh from the neighboring shambles, "has it come about that M. le Ministre Colbert can arrest, condemn, and behead whom he pleases?"

The man addressed scowled at the armed men guarding the prisoner, and muttered: "Devil

take them!" Then turning, he replied in a low guttural voice: "They say yon fellow is no criminal, but has been hounded to the galleys and the Bastille, and from the Bastille to the block by the hate of my Lord Colbert."

"To think," the fish-wife resumed, "that this Colbert, who was nothing but a wine merchant's son, should be able to worm his way into the secrets of my Lord the late Cardinal, so that he recommended him on his deathbed to His Majesty! *Mon Dieu!* It is bad enough to have them that are born lords to rule over us, but when such an upstart as this Colbert — faugh! I spit upon him."

"Sh! not so loud," interrupted a tanner, who made up the third member of the group. "My Lord Colbert's ears are sharp to hear every word said against him, and his arms are long to reach for those he wishes to silence. But I agree with you that he is a villain. You remember how he betrayed Fouquet, who was always the poor man's friend, and then took his place as Minister? Ah! look you, they are all ready now for their victim. *Sacré!* How I should like to knock the heads of a couple of those soldiers together and thus make a way for him to escape." And so saying, he brought his giant fists together with sufficient force to crush two human skulls had they been in his grasp.

While this conversation had been going on and the condemned man was being helped down from the cart, the sun's brightness gradually lessened, and more than one spectator involuntarily looked up to see what cloud obscured the light. But there was nothing visible in the clear sky. Yet little by little did the noon-time brilliancy fade away, as though the eternal fires were being quenched. Soon others noticed it, and craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the cause of the sudden change. They too, seeing no cloud, became uneasy, until their fear spread through the crowd, making it surge to and fro. A few of the women crossed themselves and others muttered a prayer. "*Le bon Dieu* is angry," some one said. "This man must be innocent," another shouted.

Through it all the soldiers never faltered, but went steadily on with the preparations for the final execution. The prisoner had started up the human lane towards the scaffold. Half-way to his destination, he was halted while the lines of soldiery who had been driven together by the pressure of the multitude forced the people back. No one but the soldiers watched the prisoner, who, after a glance at the darkening sky, smiled grimly, then watched keenly the turn of events.

The light did not increase, but became more

and more obscure, and that nameless terror which often seizes a great multitude and forces them to attempt to flee manifested itself. Only one more terrifying element was needed to change the assembly into a panic-stricken, stampeding mob. Nor was this wanting, for the wall of a building that was being dismantled on one side of the square, now occupied by a clinging crowd of spectators, suddenly fell with a crash and a great cloud of dust.

Back and away from this new source of terror the crowd turned as the shrieks of the injured arose, adding to the weirdness of the scene, and the square was filled with a wild, mad, fear-crazed crush of human beings. They cared naught for soldiers or executioners now, but rushed toward the various streets leading out from the square, breaking through the lines of guards as though they had been men of straw, each filled with but one desire, that of leaving the accursed spot.

During the confusion, the prisoner, with an eye alert for any opportunity to escape, was partly torn, partly dodged away from his captors, and was soon lost in the tumult. As he was borne along, he passed a herculean butcher and a fish-wife struggling in the jam. The latter, with a smile of satisfaction, ran the keen edge of a small knife over the cords that bound the fugitive's hands, and he was free.

High up in the most weather-stained of a row of gable-ended houses that overlooked the square wherein the above scene of terror was enacted sat a man. His room was on the top floor under the eaves, whose side walls were formed by the slanting roof. Two windows admitted both light and air; one of them opened upon the square, the other upon the Rue de la Tanerie. The only furniture besides the bed was a table, three chairs of rough wood and fantastically carved, and a small-sized cupboard, half wardrobe, that occupied most of the space at one end of the room.

On the table rested a glove and a sword, such as the gentlemen of the court wore, while a plumed hat lay on the floor where it had been carelessly dropped. The sole occupant of the room was seated in the largest chair beside the table. He was about eight and twenty, clad in an attire that proclaimed him to be at once the soldier and the courtier, and his clear eye and cheek bronzed by many a league of ocean wind and Southern sun betrayed a man not long returned from active service. A little above the average in height he was, but straight-limbed and supple as a Grecian athlete; a man of muscle and sinew, yet without an ounce of superfluous fat. His long black hair clustered about his wrists as he sat with elbows upon the table, leaning his head upon his hands,

one of which was gloved. Something more than the tan of sun and air darkened his cheeks, while the black eyes, the curved nostrils that expanded and contracted as he breathed, and the scornful lip, all proclaimed him to be other than a Frenchman.

His attitude was one of dejection and disappointment, yet in his eye was that inextinguishable glimmer of hope that lightens up the face of every true soldier after the first shock of a battle against great odds passes away. It soon spread, and from a glimmer it became a glow that overran his countenance, until he burst forth into a laugh, and, raising his head and leaning back, he spoke aloud to his sword, which he took up in his ungloved hand:

"*Ma foi! mon brave*, here we are at the bottom of the ladder again whence we started ten years ago. What matters it, though! When the King needs us again, he will remember us. If there be an expedition against the Mediterranean pirates undertaken, it will be a summons for Captain Henri de Tonti to attend His Majesty's convenience for the purpose of fitting out and leading that expedition. And there will be a year or two of fighting, and a wound, with a plaster to patch it up with when we return in the shape of another order on the Treasury for three hundred livres, and the promise of a place in the

Guards — and then, forgetfulness. Or perhaps 't will be land duty against the half-drunk Dutchmen. Then it 's powder and bang at a distance, and sword thrust and parry when we have charged the works, like this, *en garde!* — or this — or that — or that — *mon Dieu! avec mes compliments, Messieurs,*" and, springing to his feet, he fenced with an imaginary adversary, now parrying, now thrusting, until, ending with a fierce onslaught that pierced his enemy to the heart, he bowed mockingly and sat down.

"*Ma foi!* then it 's powder and wigs, slim waist and curved ankle when we return, for nothing pleases me more than to see again a Frenchwoman after a foreign campaign. Those stupid Dutch oxen, with their big eyes and clumsy feet, may please Mynheer, but — *cuistre!* none of them for me. What right have I, a battered soldier of fortune with neither penny nor power, to talk of women, waists, or wigs, when I have but a single louis d'or between me and the street! Come, *mon cœur*, and let us face the situation. My rent is not due for a week come Tuesday: that will take half; with the remainder I can get bread and wine enough to last for that period. *Dame!* ten days are sufficient in which to conquer a province, marry a widow with fat money bags, or run into some lucky adventure that will give me gold enough to live like a prince for

another month. But, *peste!* how dark it grows, and yet it is only midday" — and going to the window overlooking the square, he glanced anxiously about him. "Ha! another execution is afoot," he continued to himself half audibly. "Some petty noble who has displeased the King, or a poor farmer rebelling against Colbert's taxes. An eclipse too! That augers well for me. 'T was an eclipse that I watched just before my appointed captaincy at Messina. Again, the shooting stars appeared the last night of my captivity after Libisso and warned me of my release. It means a change of fortune; and, as any change can but be for the better, I welcome its arrival. *Mordi!* but the crowd is frightened; like the sheep I used to see outside Naples when a boy, as the thunder startled them from their grazing — Ha! they break through the lines of guards — *Cor Dieu!* — the prisoner escapes — he flees — what fools and cowards to go mad over a falling wall and a blinking sun."

And speaking thus he turned away from the window, threw himself down into a chair placed in front of the other casement, which he opened, and sat half dreamily watching the still darkening sky. . . . The moments passed. . . . At length he roused himself. "*Per Dio!*" he murmured. "My poor father needed sorely some such portent as this when he gained the Car-

dinal's ear, for well he believed that Fortune favored him, when, lo! disgrace, imprisonment, and I know not but that death itself became suddenly his portion. . . . *Mille tonnerres!*" He sprang up with a cry of amazement, as he saw the opening of the window suddenly obstructed by some opaque body. By the time he stood upright, this body resolved itself into a pair of human legs, that, after dangling a moment in the air, found lodgement on the sill, and before the young soldier could move or utter another sound, the figure of a man descended into the room and stood before him.

# Chapter Two

SHOWS HOW AN OFFICER OF THE GUARD ALMOST MAKES A DISCOVERY, AND THE FIRM OF TONTI AND COMPANY IS FORMED

THERE was good need of Tonti's surprise, for the suddenness of the apparition, its means of entrance, together with the grotesqueness of facial expression visible, were all calculated to startle even the bravest of soldiers. The figure was that of a man a little over five feet in height, whose age might have been anywhere between thirty and forty-five, clad in the black clothes that only the condemned wear on their way to execution. His features were small and sharp, with a look of mingled cunning and resoluteness. In places the skin was disfigured with the marks of small-pox that in some lights seemed to extend themselves over the entire face. The scars above and below the eyes were so plentiful that in their healing they had apparently drawn down the lower and raised the upper lids, so as to present the wild staring eyes of a madman. The mouth was large and of plebeian shape, and the lower

jaw, seeming to hang like a half-shut door, revealed three glistening fangs that resembled more those of a wolf than the teeth of a human being, while saliva dripped incessantly from the corners of the mouth down the chin. The ears, of unusual size originally, had been clipped so that only the lower two-thirds remained. A scar, starting between the eyes at the root of the nose, ran upward until it was lost in the tangled masses of his reddish-brown hair. His eyes, which were the most remarkable feature of all, in addition to their stare were of that rare and curious shade of gray which changed in expression according to the mood of the owner; then they seemed to gleam alternately with the mad fires of the hopeless maniac, and again with the all-but-quenched rays of reason of an idiot. All of these physical peculiarities were accentuated by the creature, as he stood with arms akimbo, feet well apart, eyes almost starting from their sockets, tongue protruding, and ears slowly moving up and down, while a most diabolical grin overspread the greater portion of his face.

As Tonti stood gazing at the strange being, he at first involuntarily made the sign of the cross in the air, as though to exorcise this devil-child. But soon recovering himself, he burst into a hearty laugh.

"*Mordioux!*" he cried. "What have we

here? Some gargoyle strayed from his post on the stone corners of Notre Dame; or is it a new court jester; or one of the Gadarene swine that became possessed of devils the good Abbé Renaudot told me of? Ha, ha! or best of all, one of the progeny of that hell-hound Mazarin or my Lord Colbert — *hola!* none of that, or out of the window you shall go as you came, only head first."

This last exclamation was induced by a sudden movement of the fantastic creature before him. During the first part of Tonti's speech the little man had stood playing the idiot, but as soon as Colbert's name was mentioned, he suddenly changed his expression. The gray eyes lost their look of madness and gleamed with a light of intense hatred. Suddenly drawing a small dagger from his person, he threw it in the face of Tonti, who stood about three paces off. The soldier had often seen that look in an adversary's eye in duel and battle, and he knew well it portended some sudden action. Instinctively he raised his hand to ward off the impending danger, as he saw the movement of the man's arm. The weapon glanced through the air, and struck the uplifted palm of his left hand. Instead of piercing it, as one would have expected from the force with which it was thrown, it stopped with a metallic clink and fell with

blunted point to the floor. Quick as thought, the young soldier sprang to his sword, seized it, and came at his treacherous visitor, who stood awaiting his approach without making the slightest movement. Tonti presented the point against his breast, exclaiming:

"Now then, my fine fellow, if you have any more such compliments to give me, kindly do it now, and I shall show you in return how we spit a chicken for roasting in my native town."

The man glared at him a moment, then with a sudden effort reorganized his features completely. This was as much of a surprise to Tonti as the attack had been, for in an instant the protruding tongue and fangs disappeared, the eyes became less prominent and lost their wildness, and the whole man was changed; even the scars seemed to lose their whiteness and become more like the surrounding skin. A supplicating look came into his face, and as Tonti's sword-point was dropped in his amazement, the man fell on his knees, murmuring: "*Pardon! Pardon!*"

"Get up, you rogue, or I shall turn you over to the authorities for an escaped prisoner," was Tonti's reply, as he stepped back with hand leaning on his weapon, so as to have it ready for another outbreak. "Why and how do you come here, who are you, and what do you want?"

The man arose and stood facing him with a respectful air, as he replied:

"Why do I come? A cornered mouse makes scant choice of holes. How? Over the roofs. My name? Jean Pompon Comarin, *à votre service, Monsieur;* usually called Pompon for short by my intimates, a privilege I gladly extend to you." (A muttered "*Peste!* much I want of your privileges" from Tonti.) "My present residence is an unknown quantity; for the past six years one of the lowermost dungeons of the Bastille. My wants? Simple: merely food and a hiding-place. I sought first to frighten you, thinking you to be as big a fool as those simple-minded children out there." He pointed out the window to the square where the crowd had been. "Then, thinking you were an ally of Colbert, I sought to kill you; finding you neither, I wish to be your friend."

For a moment Tonti stared at his companion, then, glancing at his outstretched hand and impudent smile, he placed his sword on the table, fell into his chair, and, lying back with one leg thrown over its arm, laughed until the tears blinded him and coursed down his cheeks.

"*Ventre Saint Gris!* but I would not have missed this exhibition, no, not for a thousand pistoles. What a face and ears and teeth and —*cospetto!* in a moment he is changed from a

devil into a man. Then, too, his story — ha, ha! 'A cornered mouse makes scant choice of holes,' not badly spoken. I may call him 'Pompon' if I choose; he wishes to be my friend. I am overwhelmed with honors. But look you, friend Pompon," here he sat up and his face became sober as a thought seemed to strike him, "do you not admit that you are the prisoner about to be executed that I saw but a short while back carried along by the frightened crowd?"

The man nodded.

"How did you get your wrists untied?"

"Some friendly hand cut the rope while I was struggling in my escape."

"And where got you yon dagger that you seemed so anxious to present me with a moment ago?"

"The same friendly hand that loosed me slipped it into my palm as I passed by. Entering an empty building, I hid upon the roof. I crept along to this house, and looking over the edge, I saw the casement open, and hearing no sound, thought the room was vacant. Knowing that as long as darkness continued I would escape detection by any in the street below, I lowered myself in."

"Well done, Pompon; it seems that thou hast something besides popping eyeballs in that head of thine. *Dame!* if your plight does not

appeal to me. Since when have you eaten and drunken?"

"Not since yesterday morning, Monsieur."

"*Hein!* then you must first of all be filled. Open yon door and from the shelf get the remains of a game-pie and that bottle of wine you will find there. 'T is all I have, but you may share."

The man obeyed; and after draining a glass of red wine, he closed the closet door without touching the pie, and, going to the window, peered forth.

"It is a bold mouse that makes its nest in the cat's ear," he said, as he pointed to a group of soldiers who issued from a neighboring house, entered the next, and disappeared.

"*Ma foi!* a search party!" ejaculated Tonti. "'T is only a short time before they will be here. What shall I do with you? You are too large for my closet, and there is nothing else in which you could hide."

"Perhaps Monsieur has clothes I could disguise myself in."

"Yes, I have here," as he opened a drawer in the wardrobe, "the garb of an Italian fisherman I brought with me to Paris for a servant. But my money went; then he did also."

"An empty purse frightens away friends," Pompon remarked.

"*Peste!* Yes, 't is the way of the world. Here they are, but you will need a stain of some sort for your face. Six years in the Bastille does not give the tan that the sun does on the Bay of Naples. While you dress I shall try and find something."

"Go into the first *cabaret* on the Rue de la Tanerie, and whisper in the ear of the *cabaretier* the words 'Remember sixty-four,' tell him what you want, and he will give it to you."

Tonti heard this with a look of surprise, but wasted no time. He soon returned with a bottle of the desired dye. Pompon meanwhile had exchanged his prison garments for those of a Neapolitan peasant. A touch here and a twist there from Tonti soon made him right. The stain which Pompon skilfully applied, and a red kerchief about his head so arranged as to hide in a great measure the scar on his forehead, altered his appearance so that Tonti himself was astounded.

"*Mille tonnerres!*" he exclaimed. "I defy even your jailer to recognize you now. When they come you can play the servant, busy in the dark corner there polishing my sword. I shall pretend that you are dumb. If spoken to, make signs, and do not be surprised if I address you in Italian. Now take your place and we can talk until the party arrives. Tell me your story. 'T will help pass the time."

So saying, he tipped his chair back, and with his feet on the table looked the comfortable listener that he was. Pompon, after placing the bottle of wine and a glass near his elbow, retired to the corner indicated, and, taking the sword, began to rub it vigorously.

"Since Monsieur wishes it," he began, "I shall tell him what I can. That is small enough return for his saving my life now. I was born in Provençe not far from Marseilles. 'A child born in the new moon will encounter great perils in life' is a well-known Provençal saying. It was surely true in my case, for my whole life can be best described in one sentence — 'Out of the pan, into the coals.' Not to weary you, I shall skip the early years up to the time I entered the service of M. Fouquet."

"The late Superintendent of Finance?" interrupted Tonti in some surprise.

"The same. For ten years I was one of his confidential servants. When M. Colbert, as Intendant, set about to ferret out something by which he could cause M. Fouquet's downfall, I was employed to watch M. Colbert. We played a fine game of it, and were evenly matched until he called to his aid the whole machinery of the Order of the Jesuits. That made him too strong for us. You know the rest; how M. Fouquet was finally disgraced and confined in the fortress

at Pignerol. Whether he be dead or no (*le bon Dieu* rest his soul!) I know not. Colbert wished to be revenged on me for having thwarted his plans so long, but could do nothing until he got one of his creatures, the Jesuit innkeeper Feriol, to swear that I had tried to induce him to join me in a plot to murder the King. This was excuse enough, so after five years' imprisonment in the Bastille, I was sent to the galleys in the hope that I would be killed. After three years of that life I escaped, was recaptured, and sent back to the Bastille. That was six years ago. They tried their utmost there to incite me to violence so that they could have a new excuse to execute me. They dared not kill me without some cause, for many of M. Fouquet's friends are alive still, and wield sufficient power to make it hazardous for even Colbert to attempt anything like that without some shadow of legal right. They finally succeeded, however. A fellow-prisoner, a feeble old man whose cell adjoined mine, was so ill treated before my very eyes that I grew reckless and killed his assailant in my rage at their inhumanity. Hence my condemnation and attempted execution to-day."

"Well done, *mon brave*," cried Tonti. "Just what I should have done myself. A feeble old man — *sangue di Dio!* It makes my blood boil to think what my poor old father may be this

moment suffering. He incurred the displeasure of the King and Mazarin, and was imprisoned while I was away on my first campaign. No word can I get of him. No, not even the place of his imprisonment. Ah! Louis! Louis! you accept the oath of the son to fight for you, to die for you, and yet the nobler father lies languishing in some slimy dungeon, his services unrewarded, his very name forgot. *Mon Dieu!* and if it were not for my oath and my father's last words to me that in the years to come the King would need the service of every loyal heart and wrist, I vow by Saint Denis, and the finger bone of holy Sainte Anne I saw at Rome, I would try my sword whether or no it could pierce the stone you wear in place of a heart — Ha! I hear the sound of soldiers on the stairs. To work, Pompon, and may Saint Anthony of Padua carry us through in safety!"

So saying, he again leaned back in his chair and, with a half-filled glass in his hand, sang:

*"Nous sommes comtes et barons,*
*Nous portons la noble couronne;*
*De l'or, des joyaux, des fleurons*
*De riche éclat nous environne.*
*La fortune a suivi nos pas*
*Où donc? Où donc? Vrai, je ne la vois pas;*
*Mais la richesse, avec tous ses appas,*
*Va couler de cette bouteille.*

*" Nous avons vaincu mille fois*
*L'Espagne et la Flandre en ruine ;*
*Fiers généraux, cordons et croix*
*S'étalent sur notre poitrine.*
*Tous les lauriers sèment nos pas*
*Sous les berceaux de cette treille.*
*Où donc ? Où donc ? Vrai, je ne la vois pas ;*
*Mais de la gloire un rêve plein d'appas*
*Va couler de cette bouteille."*

A loud knock at the door and a gruff voice crying, " Open, in the King's name ! " drowned the sound of his words. He hesitated, then began his song again. A second call, more peremptory than the first, followed.

" *Hola !* " he exclaimed in a loud tone, " I believe I heard some one at the door. *Entrez !* whoever you are, and devil take you for interrupting my song just as I was about to compose another verse to fit the last." And thus speaking, he turned his head and looked over his shoulder at an officer of the Guards who stood in the doorway, while the heads of three soldiers were seen behind him.

" *Diamine !* " he cried in well-feigned surprise. " Soldiers ! And led by my old friend Bertrand. Sit here, *mon ami*, and tell me how you came to find me out."

The officer addressed, as fine a specimen as any in the King's service, gave him his hand and shook it heartily, laughing as he did so.

"*Mon Dieu!* Captain de Tonti, where did you come from? You were far from my thoughts, *mon ami*, when I entered. I knew not that you lodged here. I am after different game. I am on a hangman's errand. That accursed criminal that escaped in the crowd in the square below is supposed to be in hiding somewhere near, and I am detailed to give all the houses in the vicinity a careful search. Have you seen or heard anything of the rascally rogue?"

"Not I," said Tonti. "Neither rogue nor rascal have I seen this day. No one has been here save my servant Jacopo and myself. We two are a jolly company. He has no tongue, hence cannot answer back when I scold him. Wait until I tell him to fetch another glass. *Hola!* Jacopo!" — then he muttered an Italian phrase that was unintelligible to his companions. At this the supposed servant arose, and, placing a second glass on the table, retired to his corner without uttering a sound. Bertrand looked at him sharply, then turned to Tonti and said:

"Where got you yon pirate? From one of your Mediterranean campaigns?"

Tonti noticed his glance, but said nothing until he had carefully filled his friend's glass and then his own.

"*Ma foi!* You would call him pirate in truth did you but know his history. Some day I shall

tell it you. It is too long to begin now. *Dame!* but I believe I did hear some slight sound on the roof an hour or more ago. I thought it but the scurrying of rats; they are plentiful enough here, God knows. Perchance, though, he whom you seek is up there. Let your men search the roofs and chimneys while you tarry here with me until their return."

The temptation was strong, and Bertrand, after giving an order to the men, sat down with his chair facing the open door so that he could see if any one appeared in the passageway.

"How like you my lodging?" cried Tonti merrily. "I regret that the tapestries and hangings are down to be cleaned to-day, while the carved furniture has all been sent to be polished for a *levée* I intend to hold next week. Then, too, see what a view in two directions. Fresh air is healthful, my leech tells me, while the higher up one lives, the nearer heaven. How now, man, why so sad?" he continued, as he saw that his companion did not enter into the spirit of his talk.

"Ah me!" sighed the burly guardsman. "'T is the same old tale: a pretty face; an insolent fellow's sneer; a quarrel; a duel."

"*Mordioux!*" exclaimed Tonti, in mock horror. "Know you not of the King's edict against duelling? For shame, a guardsman too!" and

giving way to a burst of merriment, he laughed and beat the table with his fist.

"You would have done the same yourself," replied his friend ruefully. "Such features! Such eyes! Such teeth! What mischievous glances, and what a slender waist!"

"Come, tell me all about it," urged Tonti, as he realized the necessity of keeping the guardsman interested until the return of his men. "Is she court-bred?"

"No. Methinks a flower from Brittany or Poitou."

"Tall, fair, and gentle-born?"

"Yes, and regal as a queen."

"Her name?"

"I know not; only this: she has the protection of Mademoiselle, the adoration of all true men and the hate and envy of all the court ladies."

"So wondrous beautiful," mused Tonti. "Then the King will get her."

"No. For Mademoiselle loves not her royal cousin overmuch at present, and will see to it that he gains no sight of her. I have seen her but once myself, and that at a distance. 'T is but few have even that privilege."

"Ah well, *mon ami*, you may win her yet. — *Hein!* here are your men returning from their rat-hunt empty handed. Remember, though, the

proverb we have in Tuscany: 'In buying a horse and in taking a wife, shut your eyes tight and commend yourself to God.'"

Bertrand laughed, and emptying his glass, arose and joined his men, saying in parting: "Don't let your pirate stray far from home, *mon cher* Tonti, or some one will arrest him on suspicion," and was soon clattering down the stairs.

Tonti waited until they had time to gain the street when he laughed gayly at his companion.

"*Parôle d'honneur! mon cher* Pompon, but you acted your part to perfection. I shall recommend you to M. Racine for a place in his next tragedy; or perhaps the King would have you in a masque or ballet."

"Your speech, too, was excellent, Monsieur," responded Pompon. "You know that love, knavery, and necessity make men good orators. But tell me one thing, Monsieur. That guardsman called you Captain de Tonti. Is that your name?"

"*Certainement*," was the reply. "Henri de Tonti, captain in the King's forces in his Italian campaigns."

"You spoke of a father being in captivity," persisted his questioner.

"Yes, my father, Lorenzo Tonti, was a Neapolitan banker, but siding with the people in a rebellion, he was compelled to flee to France.

He proposed to Mazarin a plan of insurance that would fill the empty coffers of the King, if successfully conducted. The Cardinal, anxious to have all the credit himself, carried out my father's plans only in part. Failure was the result, and the anger of a hateful Minister and a mortified King was visited upon him. He was imprisoned while I was away on my first campaign. I have searched and pleaded for information of his whereabouts in vain. Thinking I might gain favor with the King and thus influence him to release my father, I have accepted post after post of danger and difficulty and been victorious. But appeals to his justice and generosity have alike been to no purpose. A second trial was made of my father's scheme by Mazarin before his death. They adhered to his plan strictly and were successful. The King's treasury was full enough to commence a foreign war; his Minister was rewarded; the brain that contrived and the hand that planned were allowed to remain languishing behind a prison door."

Pompon listened attentively with a strange light in his eyes. When Tonti had finished speaking he said slowly and with a tone of conviction:

"My gray-haired prison friend was your father."

"Ah, *Cielo!*" exclaimed Tonti, starting up. "The one for whom you slew the jailer?"

"The same."

With one leap Tonti seized his arm roughly, and eagerly inquired: "And he, where is—"

Pompon shook his head sadly. "It was for no purpose. I saved him from a beating, but it was too late. I heard of his death ten days later."

"His death?" cried Tonti in despair.

"Yes; starvation."

All energy seemed to depart from the young man's frame and his chin fell upon his chest in grief. "My father dead!" he murmured. "A prison life; an outcast's burial! How bitter the wage for a faithful servant."

The first shock of his emotion past, he raised his head, while his eye flashed in sudden anger.

"Curse him!" he cried in a voice vibrating with passion. "Curse him! I see it all now. It is not the King's fault so much as his Minister's. While Mazarin lived my father had no hope, and when this wine merchant's son succeeded him, he feared exposure too, and so left him to die. *Sangue di Dio!* is it not enough to risk one's life for a King but that his minion crushes one's heart also? Attention, Pompon, and hear my words. Upon this cross, my sword-hilt, I swear by all the saints of Italy and France, by my father's murdered hand and my mother's heart in Paradise, my sword shall never rest nor

my arm grow weak, nor yet my brain cease contriving against this hell-hound, child of Beelzebub, devil's spawn — this Colbert. In court, in camp, in the King's audience-chamber, or on the furthermost limits of Ind, I shall still oppose and, if I may, kill him. My strength shall oppose his strength, and my cunning his cunning, until one of us fall. Till then I keep my oath, Mary and Joseph and all the angels."

During this speech Pompon's features bespoke a lively sympathy and an ardent hatred. Tonti, after finishing, stood silent a moment, with head uplifted and sword raised in mid-air. Then with a sigh he lowered his eyes, and looked kindly at his companion. "And you, *mon cher* Pompon, how can I thank or repay you for your service?"

The man's eyes became a softened gray, as though the other's feeling had touched him, as he replied:

"Monsieur forgets he has cancelled all debts by his aid to-day. I am still his debtor."

"Nay, by the rib of John the Baptist, you are not. Pompon, you offered me your friendship; I accept." And pouring the remainder of the wine equally into the two glasses, he raised his with a smile.

"*A toi!*" he said.

"To both of us," his companion rejoined.

They touched the glasses to their lips, but before they could empty them a strange voice interrupted them by saying:

"I have a better toast: To M. Tonti and Company."

# Chapter Three

## IN WHICH THE FIRM ADMITS ANOTHER PARTNER AND AN ANCIENT DOCUMENT REVEALS MUCH WISDOM

THE two men were startled at the sound, and looked hastily toward the doorway from whence the voice proceeded.

Within it stood a man whose appearance both in manner and physical characteristics were not likely to escape observation wherever he might be placed. Taller by half a head than either Tonti or his companion, and of a decidedly heavier build; bold forehead; dark but not shaggy eyebrows; nose of a strongly marked Roman type, beneath which rested a thin dark moustache with ends twisted upward so as to give the owner a fierce and scornful expression; a full rounded chin that tended to become double, — all this betokened a man of vigor and action. But the dress was that of a fop or court dandy. A brown outer coat, embroidered with gold, was the first article that attracted one's attention. This covered a vest ornamented with

red ribbons. Above the coat was slung a shoulder-belt of twisted gold-thread supporting a sword; while a throatband of muslin, edged with fine lace, and a broad-brimmed beaver, surmounted by a double row of plumes, completed the upper part of the attire. Close-fitting breeches, of another shade of brown, and high boots, very large and open at the top, completed his fashionable dress. A fine lace handkerchief was held in one hand, and applied daintily to the nostril now and then for the benefit of the cyprus scent with which it was laden.

"You will pardon my interruption," he began, "when I have explained my errand, gentlemen. But first let me announce myself as Robert Cavelier —"

"Sieur de la Salle, the great explorer?" cried Tonti, coming forward.

"The explorer, *certainement*, but not yet great. It remains for you to help me to become that."

"I help you?"

"Yes. You are Captain Henri de Tonti, are you not?"

Tonti bowed.

"Son of Lorenzo Tonti, the Neapolitan banker who, because he sided with Masaniello, was obliged to flee from Italy?"

Tonti bowed again.

"Who first proposed the insurance plan that has filled the King's treasury; who, because the scheme was an apparent failure at first, was imprisoned by Mazarin and forgotten, and who died within the month of starvation in the Bastille?"

Tonti gazed in astonishment. "You know —" he began, but the other interposed with a graceful gesture of his hand containing the scented bit of lace.

"Yes, I know all. How you entered the French army at eighteen as cadet; fought four campaigns on board ship and three in the galleys. How at Messina you were placed in charge of a camp of twenty thousand men. How at Libisso a grenade shot away your left hand, and how, because of the delay in the arrival of the *chirurgien*, you amputated the remnant of your hand with your dagger. How you were known as 'The Man with the Iron Hand' because of the iron mechanism you had made to take the place of the lost member, and which you still wear. How, taken prisoner at Libisso, you were confined at Metasse for six months and were exchanged for the son of the Governor. On your return to France the King rewarded you with a paltry three hundred livres and a captaincy, and sent you back to join in the Sicilian campaign in the galleys. How peace has thrown you out of employment. How

you are restless and unhappy, and are eager, now that the King has no further need of you, to take up with whatever adventure promises the most gold and glory. How now? Am I not right? Do I not know all?"

During this rapid sketch of Tonti's career, he became more and more bewildered as the speaker went on, and when he ceased speaking he could make no reply.

"Ah! *mon ami*," said La Salle kindly, "do not be disturbed at my knowledge. A friend has told me. The Prince de Conti, whom I consulted in my search for a comrade, a lieutenant, told me you were suited for the post, with a hand indeed of iron and a heart of oak. That is exactly the sort of man I need."

By this time Tonti had recovered himself, and led the way to the table, motioning his visitor into a chair. He then took the sole remaining bit of gold from his pocket, gave it to Pompon, and ordered him to get a bottle of the choicest Anjou wine from the near-by *cabaret*. He then turned to the stranger.

"The Prince de Conti was a gallant leader to serve under in war, but I did not suppose he would have been so warm in his recommendation. What do you wish me to do?"

"Ah! that is a question easily answered," replied La Salle, as he gave one farewell whiff at

his handkerchief, then put it away, and, straightening himself in the chair, spoke earnestly and with rapidity. All mannerism of the court dandy was gone, and the direct, business-like air of a man of the world who has to deal with affairs of moment took its place.

"I have, as you know, made some explorations in New France, starting out from my possessions near Montreal. But I am satisfied that much lies beyond; that there we are partly on our way to China, and that ere long one of His Majesty's ships can sail direct from the harbor of La Rochelle past Quebec and Montreal to China and the Indies. It is a glorious life, a warfare against Nature and wild men, with great difficulties to be overcome and victories to be gained, but free; free air, free action, free range. Once beyond the settlement of Montreal and one need be answerable to no man. With help from the Governor, we can build up so large a trade in beaver-skins within a few years that great wealth will be ours, greater than a soldier of the King could ever hope to gain in all his life's service."

Pompon returned with the wine, and, after filling the glasses, stood behind Tonti's chair, watchful to see and hear all that went on.

"I have here letters from Comte de Frontenac, Governor of New France, to Colbert. Already

the King has granted me several audiences, and both he and his Minister are favorable to my plans. He has awarded certain moneys, and I have collected all but twenty thousand francs of the necessary remainder from my relatives and friends."

Tonti here bethought himself of presenting Pompon, and after he had sent him out again on a needless errand, told La Salle what he knew of his history. When he returned La Salle eyed him critically during their conversation, and finally, after arousing their enthusiasm by showing them rude maps of the wilderness and relating tales of adventure that stirred the blood, he wound up by asking them both to accompany him on his next expedition, that was to start shortly.

"You will thus, Captain de Tonti," he concluded, "escape the arduous service of a King who forgets, and the constant hopeless storing up of hatred against his Minister. I warn you that if you remain here it will be but to eat your heart out in helpless misery. You cannot touch him; he is too high. Come with me and forget the past; escape the constant reminders of wrongs suffered. You will, too, in a measure be serving your chosen King by extending his domain and adding new glory to the crown he wears; besides," he continued, in a tone a shade more

earnest and subdued, "think of the thousands of benighted souls that will thus have the benefits and offices of Mother Church brought to them. Think of it; wealth gained; ambition satisfied; a name made famous; an oath of allegiance still kept inviolate. This applies also to you, M. Pompon. While in this country you will be in constant danger. Once reach the western land and all the kings of the earth with all their soldiers could not find you. Who knows what deeds of prowess you may achieve and perhaps through them win a pardon and so come home to spend your latter days in peace?"

"*Mordioux!*" cried Tonti, all aflame with eagerness to carry out the proposed plan. "When do we start?"

"As nearly two weeks from to-morrow as we can. The ship is the 'Saint Honoré,' and we sail from La Rochelle."

"We will go with you," suddenly spoke up Pompon, "and you need look no further for the twenty thousand francs; Captain de Tonti and myself will furnish them as our share of the expedition."

Tonti looked at his newly-made friend in a condition bordering upon stupefaction. For himself, he had no money, and this man, just out of the Bastille, he knew could have none either. A look from Pompon checked any exclamation of

surprise that he might have made, so he contented himself by offering his hand to La Salle in token of his acceptance.

"But how about the royal commission?" he asked. "Will that not be necessary?"

"Yes," replied the explorer, "but leave that to me. To-day is Tuesday. Meet me in the King's antechamber on Friday and all will be easy. Now, as for myself, I must go on to the palace. You see now why I interrupted your toast. Fill me another glass and pledge all health and success to the three members of the firm of M. Tonti and Company."

So saying, he drained his wine to the last drop, and, picking up his hat and drawing forth his handkerchief, waved a perfumed farewell to the two men and left the room.

For a moment there was silence in the room. Then Pompon spoke: "Fortune is a woman; if you neglect her to-day, expect not to regain her to-morrow. She knocks once at every man's door; he is a fool who does not invite her in."

"True, *mon ami*," replied the other, "and in this case, if we once get her in, we will bolt the door behind her so she cannot escape. But tell me, why did you offer the twenty thousand francs when we have not so much as half a louis left,— unless perhaps you found the pockets of those clothes I gave you lined with *rouleaux* of gold?"

"The sea is not measured with a bushel, neither is a man always known by his looks," was the enigmatical reply. "Wait for me here," and Pompon glided out of the door and stole silently down the stairs. He was back within a half-hour, bearing in his hand a mildewed bit of parchment. He summoned Tonti to the window where the light was good and carefully unfolded it.

"This happens to be a parchment written upon with a secret ink that dampness will not blur. The day before M. Fouquet was taken I learned of his proposed arrest, and at considerable risk warned him of his danger and begged him to flee while there was yet time. He only laughed and said he would not run. He wrote on this piece of parchment and handed it to me, saying: '*Mon brave* Pompon, I have buried the sum of fifty thousand francs in the place described here. Take this, and if I am arrested, go and get the money and leave France at once.' He was arrested the very next day, and I the day after, before I had time to get the gold. I managed to hide this paper with my friend the *cabaretier*, who furnished you with the dye, before I was imprisoned. You see he has been faithful to my trust and has kept it safe for me all these years."

So saying, he thrust the paper before the as-

tonished eyes of Tonti, who read the first line as follows:

"EMRMRFCTGJJYECMDCAMSCLRMRFC."

"'T is all in cipher!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, the same that M. Fouquet used, and in which I wrote his secret messages," responded Pompon. "But it is very simple. Each letter is two places in the alphabet removed from the proper one. So all you have to do is to count ahead two letters each time. The first line will then be:

"'GO TO THE VILLAGE OF ECOUEN TO THE.'"

"*Bravo!*" cried Tonti, "let us finish reading it."

They went on, and, after the whole had been deciphered, the hidden message read:

"GO TO THE VILLAGE OF ECOUEN TO THE INN CALLED THE STRIPED ASS. TAKE OUT THE MIDDLE FLOOR BRICK IN THE ROW NEXT TO THE HEARTHSTONE AND PULL ON THE IRON RING BENEATH IT. THEN GO TO EITHER END OF THE STONE AND BEAR YOUR WEIGHT UPON IT. THE STONE WILL TURN, AND IN THE HOLE BENEATH IT YOU WILL FIND TWO BAGS, EACH CONTAINING A THOUSAND PISTOLES. THEY ARE YOURS IN TOKEN OF MANY YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE."

"*Corpo di Bacco!* Two thousand pistoles!" exclaimed Tonti. "That will leave thirty thousand francs, after paying M. de la Salle. What will you do with it?"

"I think we can find a way to spend it."

"We?"

"Yes, *certainement*. Have we not drunk to the health of M. Tonti and Company? We have much to do before we leave France, and both of us may need to have a goodly sum of gold. It will be a powerful ally in danger."

"Devil take me, Pompon, if you are not right. A full purse is better than ten friends."

"We shall need it, too, when we reach the New World, for there will be many difficulties there to be overcome. Money will make the pot boil, though the devil pour water on the fire," concluded Pompon.

"*Ma foi! mon ami*, I accept your contribution for the adventure. I shall repay you my share out of the first load of beaver-skins I sell. But, what am I saying? The money is not ours yet. It may have been discovered before now or we may find the inn destroyed. 'T is now fourteen years since he gave you this paper," and from a state of exaltation, Tonti became suddenly sober and crestfallen.

"It is good to fear the worst; the best saves itself," said Pompon. "The only way to settle

the question is to go there. Do you know where Ecouen is?"

"*Ma foi!* No."

"It is distant about four leagues from Paris. By leaving here at eight o'clock to-night, we can ride there easily in two hours, do what we have to do, and be back by day. It is for you to borrow a hundred livres from your friends and hire a horse and an ass. Leave the ass with the *cabaretier* in the Rue de la Tanerie, and be yourself near the Porte Dauphin. If you see a monk pass out by the gate mounted on an ass, follow him, but do not address nor try to come up to him, until he speaks to the animal he rides. I shall have to have a few livres to get my disguise with, so you had best be gone to borrow the money."

"*Par Dieu!* a good plan," said Tonti, "I shall do it. You beat me at the game of cunning, but when real open fighting comes, I shall do like this," and, seizing Pompon about the waist, he raised him from the ground, and by a sudden powerful exertion held him aloft above his head with his two arms extended. "I have you now, you weazel. Where shall I throw you?"

"Your arm may be strong, but my wit is not wanting," was the reply. "You know a mouse can gnaw a rope that a lion cannot break. Come, *mon Capitaine*, it is time now for work; to-morrow we can play."

# Chapter Four

SHOWS HOW MINE HOST OF "THE STRIPED ASS" TREATED HIS GUESTS, AND HOW HIS PUNISHMENT WAS MADE TO FIT HIS CRIME

IT wanted but a few minutes to eight the same evening when the figure of Tonti might have been observed riding slowly along near the bank of the Seine. He walked his horse as though he were in no hurry and his ride were without an object. When opposite Le Pont Neuf, he halted and watched for a moment the group of idlers gathered about the equestrian statue of King Henry in the centre of the bridge, who were leaning over the parapet and engaged in bandying jests with the boatmen passing beneath the arches. Having seemingly gained all the amusement possible from a contemplation of this spectacle, Tonti soon resumed his journey, turning off in a short time from the river-bank and threading his way through various cross-streets until he reached the Rue St. Honoré. Following this thoroughfare as far as the city gate, he stopped his horse in the shelter of the wall of Les Capucins, to await his companion.

In a moment or two he beheld a sight that made it hard for his mirth-loving nature to keep itself within bounds. A small white ass came ambling along and passed him, carrying a very fat, unwieldly-formed monk of the Franciscan order, clad in a gray cowl, girdle, and sandals. His monkship apparently had not been astride an animal for a long time, and such were the evident signs of discomfort on his face that one instantly surmised that he was undergoing a penance of some sort. He made no attempt to guide the ass, but sat holding on helplessly to the rope that served as rein and bridle. The gate was not yet closed for the night, so he passed unchallenged, the guards laughing heartily at the figure he cut. Tonti waited until he had gotten a couple of minutes' start of him, and then turned into the road and passed likewise through the gate without hindrance. The night watch had just arrived, and in the confusion attending the change of guard he was easily overlooked. He had hardly gone a score of paces beyond, when he heard the gate close behind him. Any one leaving or entering after that hour would be carefully scrutinized.

In the fast-gathering gloom, Tonti spied his ecclesiastical friend trotting peacefully along the Chemin de Villers. He hurriedly followed him, but preserved a respectful distance. He received

no sign, neither heard any sound from him. Becoming alarmed lest he had really made a mistake, he was about to turn back toward the city, when suddenly the ghostly figure began beating his animal with the rein and kicking his sides as effectively as he could with his sandalled feet.

"A murrain seize this beast for a vicious, rough-riding child of Beelzebub. May the devil take him and all his kind! Ha! *mon ami* Tonti, I feared it was not you. Some one else followed me on a horse almost up to the gate, and I did not know but that you were he. I fear that he suspected that I was disguised. I don't believe that I sit well when I ride."

A shout of laughter from Tonti greeted this speech.

"*Peste!* Pompon, if I do not get you a place in the Horse Guards. You sit your animal like a sack of meal."

"You would look like one yourself," Pompon replied rather testily, "if you had a back stuffed with straw and a paunch made out of enough hay to keep a horse in health for a week, all squeezed into a heavy cowl and tied together with a stout cord. Between the heat and discomfort of my disguise, and the jolting of this beast, I am thankful we have only four leagues to go. He who is in great haste should not ride an ass."

"Where got you your disguise?" queried Tonti.

"From my friend the *cabaretier*," was the reply. "He was one of M. Fouquet's secret agents; many is the message I have taken from him. The words 'Remember sixty-four' that I told you to whisper to him is the secret means of recognition among all those who were connected with the unfortunate Minister. It was in 1664, you know, that he fell."

"Are there many others?"

"Hundreds. They are in every rank and condition. M. Fouquet was a good master to serve and a liberal one, as I can bear witness. All who served him loved him."

Talking thus of his old employer, a theme Pompon never tired of, the strangely assorted pair rode on into the shades of the on-coming night. When about half the distance had been traversed, they turned off into a road leading to the left, and by ten o'clock saw a light or two from the small hamlet of Ecouen twinkling in the darkness ahead of them. On reaching the outskirts of the village, they dismounted and led their beasts into a wood at the side of the road and tethered them.

Entering the town on foot, they found it considerably later than they had hoped for, so they quickened their pace, lest the inn be closed for

the night. Here and there a light was visible where some late-a-bed still kept his house open for a neighborly game of dice, and from one or two half-open doors came the sound of feasting. As they drew near the most prominent of the window-lights, they found it to belong to an inn of the older type. All was still in the story above, and quiet reigned about the place. A shed for the disposal of travellers' horses was situated at one end of the building, while above the door a sign of some sort grated harshly as the light night wind moved it slowly to and fro. It was too dark for the two men to decipher anything on the signboard, so they approached the window from which the glow proceeded. Tonti raised himself on tiptoe and looked in.

The interior was apparently empty, and consisted of the usual public-room of the average inn of the period. Upon the huge hearth a bright fire was blazing, which cast alternate light and shade upon the low ceiling and the further corners of the room. A number of heavy wooden tables with benches around them filled up the greater portion of the floor space. On these a profusion of emptied, dirty glasses and mugs bespoke a good night's custom for the proprietor. At the side of the room was arranged a kind of private office, as it were, fenced off from the rest by a railing, behind which was placed a table

and a bench. It was evidently the innkeeper's especial domain, for, as Tonti's eyes became more accustomed to the half-gloom, he spied the figure of a man seated upon the bench, busily engaged in counting a small pile of coin spread out upon the table before him. He glanced uneasily over his shoulder now and then at the door and the window, as though fearful of being seen. He soon finished his task, and quickly swept the money into a small leather pouch, which he closed with a look of satisfaction, stowing it away in the recesses of his blouse. At this moment Tonti left the window, and, advancing to the door, struck it sharply with the hilt of his sword. Pompon, whispering that he would come in later, disappeared in the darkness.

"*Hola!* Landlord, open here! Would you keep a gentleman and a soldier waiting in the night when you have within a good fire to warm his hands and good wine to cheer his heart? *Corbleu!* Open, I say, or it will be the worse for you. I am not the man to be kept waiting."

So speaking, he belabored the door with hilt and fist so lustily that the landlord came running to let him in, crying:

"Yes, yes, gentlemen, in one moment, I pray you. But do not awaken the whole house. It is late," he continued, unfastening the door and opening it an inch, peering out meanwhile to see

what manner of guests he was welcoming, "late indeed for honest folk to be about."

As soon as the crack of the door widened sufficiently to admit the hilt of the sword, Tonti inserted it, and with a quick pressure with this lever he swung the door open in spite of the landlord's efforts to hold it.

"How now, Sir Innkeeper! *Dame!* but I believe you would have kept me out there a full hour longer if you had had your way."

So speaking, he stepped into the light of the room. Upon seeing a man evidently a soldier and from Paris, the landlord's fears quieted themselves. One suspicion, however, remained.

"Pardon, Sir *Capitaine*," he cried, bowing obsequiously, "but where is your companion? Did you not say that there were two of you, a soldier and a gentleman?"

Tonti was puzzled for a moment, and then laughed.

"And may I not be both? Here, bite that, and tell me if it be gold or no. If so, fetch me a bottle of wine, the very best, and some food." So saying, he flung down a pistole upon the table near him.

The innkeeper quickly seized it, bit it, and after testing its ring, pocketed it with alacrity, his suspicions vanished.

"Draw near the fire," he exclaimed, as he

busily stirred the logs, "and I shall return presently with the best bottle to be found this side of Paris. It has been in the cellar for fourteen years, ever since I came to this town, and was there I know not how long before me."

With these words, he hastily brushed off a bench, motioned Tonti to be seated, and was gone. Tonti looked about him carefully.

"It must be the place," he murmured to himself. "He said he had been here fourteen years, and it is just that length of time since Fouquet's downfall."

His eyes wandered toward the fireplace and his thoughts were confirmed. A huge stone slab some seven feet in length and three in width constituted the hearth. This stone was bordered by a single row of bricks that were covered with dust and ashes. Tonti's eyes danced with excitement as he beheld them, and he wondered why Pompon was delayed so long and what his plan would be to get a chance of testing the truth of his cipher-message.

Presently he heard the innkeeper returning, and he reappeared bearing the remains of a huge goose-pie in one arm and a dusty, musty, cobwebbed bottle of wine in the other. These he placed before his guest, who was soon devouring the one and sipping the other, whose grapes must have weighted the vine on the sunny vineyard

slopes full thirty years before. He was about to compliment the landlord standing before him upon the excellence of his providing when he heard the voice of singing in the street outside the inn and close at hand.

*" Quand nous fûmes sur le pont qui tremble,*
*Hélas, mon Dieu!"*

were the words they heard. Then came a silence, broken only by the shuffling sound as of some one walking laboriously among the pebbles and sand of the roadway. Then came the song nearer than before:

*" Quand nous fûmes dans la Saintonge,*
*Hélas, mon Dieu!"*

followed by a heavy knock at the door. The innkeeper hastened to open it, and the light from the fire fell full on the figure of Tonti's late companion. He had found and trimmed a young tree into a serviceable pilgrim's staff, and his expression was that of great weariness.

" *Pax vobiscum*," he said gravely, addressing the innkeeper. This individual crossed himself, replying, " And with you, father."

The monk then laid aside his staff, and approached the table next to the one at which Tonti was seated.

" I would have lodging and a bit of food, for I have fasted since daybreak. Gold have I not,

for it would ill become him whose boast is that poverty is his bride to carry any money with him. But I am privileged to grant an indulgence, in return for food and lodging," and the tired monk settled down upon a bench and looked hungrily about him.

"Have you no relics that will ward off disease?" asked the innkeeper. "A bone from the hand of some good saint or something from the Holy Land?"

"Nay, nay," exclaimed the monk in seeming anger. "I am no hawker of bogus relics, nor claim any kindred with the devil-spawn who go through the land plying their unholy trade. With them they have but to see your money in their hand when the merry rogues will sell you a cart-load of laths from the ark of *père* Noah, a ring from the snout of St. Anthony's pig, or the crest of the cock that crowed before Pilate."

The landlord seemed duly impressed with the superior merits of the begging friar, and started off to get some scraps for his meal. Tonti, who had up to this time remained silent, watching the game his companion was playing, called after him:

"Bring the reverend father's meal to my table, and fetch another glass, that he may share my wine with me. I warrant he is a good judge of it."

The monk bowed his thanks, and replied with a wink at Tonti:

"He is an ill guest that never drinks to his host. Might I suggest, my soldier friend, that the good innkeeper fetch a glass for himself?"

Tonti agreed, and the host hastened to find the glasses, feeling glad to get a chance to taste some of his own rare wine at the expense of some one else.

As soon as he had disappeared, the monk reached over to Tonti's glass and shook a white powder into it, from a bit of paper in his hand, then filled it from the bottle. "Now, your part is to see that yon rascal gets your glass," he said in a low voice, and resumed his seat.

The innkeeper soon returned with two fresh glasses, which Tonti filled, and then by a deft movement of the hands he exchanged his glass for that nearest the landlord.

"Here's to our host," cried Tonti, as the man sat down and seized his glass. "May he never want a lodger!"

"And to this goodly quiet inn, the — what is your house called, Sir Host?" asked the strange monk.

"The Striped Ass," was the reply.

"To the Striped Ass, then," continued Pompon; "may his bray be ever loud to attract cus-

tomers, and his temper mild, so that he will spare them kicks."

All three drained their glasses, and a period of silence ensued, broken only by the sound of the fire and the munching of the goose-pie, as Tonti made another onslaught. A touch from the monk's foot under the table a few moments later made him look up, and he beheld the effects of the drug beginning already to manifest themselves on the face of the innkeeper, whose copious potations during the early part of the evening made him an easy prey. His eyes seemed heavy, and an overpowering desire to sleep seized him. A moment he struggled against the feeling, then surrendering to it entirely, his face fell forward on his hands, which lay upon the table.

Pompon jumped up quickly and, seizing the man, shook him to make sure of the depth of his slumbers. There was no response. "He will sleep thus for twenty-four hours. Let us hasten, though."

A table and bench were first placed in front of the door leading out of the room into the other part of the house, so that they would have time to leave in case any one approached from that direction. The other door was fastened, and the curtain drawn. Pompon, then taking a small dagger, knelt down beside the hearth, and counting the row of bricks until he came to the middle

one, he carefully dug away all the accumulated dust and dirt, and gently pried the brick from its place. Beneath it was seen a small iron ring, which he seized. It gave readily, and could be pulled out about an inch. This evidently withdrew some hidden bolt, for when he cautiously bore the weight of his foot on one extremity of the huge stone, it turned slowly on an unseen axis, one end rising into the air while the other disappeared in a large space below. Bending down, Pompon found a cavity corresponding in width and length to the stone and about four feet in depth. By lying on the floor and stretching over the hole, he was able to feel the contents. A smothered exclamation of joy passed his lips, as he tossed to the floor a bag of money, and soon after feeling around more carefully in the opening, he found another.

"What say you now, *mon ami?*" he cried joyfully. "Did I not say M. Fouquet (Heaven rest his soul!) was faithful to them who served him faithfully? Here are the two thousand pistoles."

They placed the money on the table, and swung the stone back to its normal position. Pompon then handed the bags to Tonti, and urged him to go ahead of him to the place where their animals had been left, saying that he would remain behind and attend to the unbarricading

of the door and yet overtake him before he had his horse untied.

Tonti did as suggested, leaving Pompon in the room. No sooner had he gone than Pompon approached the slumbering landlord, and, turning his face toward the light, examined it closely. As he did so, a look of awakened recognition was confirmed, and Pompon's eyes became smaller and glittered with a strange envenomed look of hatred like a snake about to strike. With deft fingers he searched the clothes of his victim, but it was not for robbery, for he left the bag of money he found there; something else was the object of his search.

At last he found a leather cord tied about the man's neck from which dangled a bright gold object. It proved to be a small seal ring with a peculiar device engraven upon its surface. Pompon carefully placed this about his own neck, then, turning to the man again, he seized him by the shoulders and dragged him to the floor and along it till he reached the hearth. He halted a moment and listened; no sound from above stairs; the stertorous breathing of his victim and the rustling of the leaves on the huge vine above the doorway outside were the only sounds audible. Once more prying up the brick, and pulling the iron ring, he pressed down one end of the stone and the empty cavity lay before him

and his prey. With considerable difficulty he managed to get the man's body into the hole beneath the stone. He then stopped another moment in his work to look down upon his enemy's form. His revengeful meditation was soon interrupted by the sound of a shuffling footstep descending the stair. He must hasten, complete his work, and flee. So after one more push, and muttering "after fourteen years," he hastily swung the stone back into place, leaving his enemy buried beneath it. He replaced the brick, sprinkled ashes around so as to obliterate all traces of his work, removed the table and bench from the inner door, and was gone.

They had ridden an hour or more in silence, and the early streaks of the coming day were fast spreading over the horizon. Tonti's thoughts, stimulated by the possession of so much gold, had crossed the seas and were ranging through the endless delights and dangers of life in the New World. Pompon, too, was busy tasting the sweets of revenge long deferred. At length he spoke to his companion:

"While you were gaining an entrance at the inn, I slipped away and visited a neighboring house. There I made inquiries about our innkeeper, and found that we were old acquaintances."

"How so?" asked Tonti in some surprise.

"You remember I told you how Colbert employed one of his creatures, a secret agent of the Jesuits (one Feriol by name), to swear to a false accusation so that I could be sent to the Bastille, with at least a show of justice?"

"Yes. And this fellow was —"

"Was the same person, now grown fat and rich from the reward of his infamous lie; the man to whose blasphemous oath I owe my fourteen years of living death, the dungeon and the galleys. It was a merry meeting, we two old friends."

Tonti started in spite of himself at the strangeness of the man's voice, which blended at the same instant a terrible intensity of hatred with a delightful pleasure as of one who rolls some rare morsel upon his tongue before swallowing it. A suspicion of what might have happened after he left Pompon alone with his long-hated enemy crossed his mind.

"What did you do to him?" he asked abruptly.

"I searched him until I found the secret ring that identifies him with the Jesuits. That I took, for we may find it a powerful aid in case of need," was the evasive reply.

"And was that all?" queried Tonti sternly.

"*Certainement!* What would you? He slept; I merely put him to bed."

# Chapter Five

DEALS WITH A FEAST, AND SHOWS HOW TONTI MEETS WITH BEAUTY AND THE BEAST AND GETS A BLOW FOR HIS PAINS

THE next noon found Tonti and Pompon back in their quarters in the Place de la Grêve. Pompon once more, with dyed face and sailor clothes, played the servant, for fear of discovery by some outsider coming in upon them suddenly.

The table was set for three, and the evidence of their recently acquired wealth was seen in the profuse expenditure for the meal before them. The nearest cook-shop had been called into requisition, and the owner thereof gasped with surprise at the number and quality of the dishes ordered to be served in a garret bedroom.

A pot of steaming bouillon sat at one end of the table, while down the middle of the board were placed a dish of mackerel cooked in fennel, a whole pheasant, three great slices of ham, a plate of mutton seasoned with garlic, a capon, a bowl of salad, a small dish of the new vegetable pease, two large dishes of pastry, and, to top it

off, the greatest delicacy of all, a plate of oranges. For lack of room on the table, six large bottles occupied the floor near by, representing the liquid portion of the feast.

Pompon was putting on the finishing touches, whilst Tonti walked up and down impatiently, as though waiting for some one.

"*Corbleu!* something must have happened to delay him. The soup will grow cold if he does not hurry," he finally exclaimed, going to the window and looking out.

"A delay is better than a disaster," remarked Pompon sententiously.

"But you are not as hungry as I, *mon ami. Pardieu!* but the sight and smell of yon meal makes my eyes to weep and my mouth to water."

"Hunger is a sharp, fierce dog. Better cross an angry man than a fasting man," was the reply. "Remember, though, it is fourteen years since I have eaten a full meal."

"A long time to wait, surely," cried La Salle, as he entered the room. "I 'll warrant you my few minutes' delay has seemed almost that long to my future lieutenant. Is it not so, *mon cher* Tonti?"

"Welcome, *mon Capitaine*, to the feast. I feared you would miss the best part of it all, and that is the delicious odor arising from the un-

touched dishes. But, *peste!* here I am talking, when we might be eating. Be seated and begin."

So saying, Tonti set the others an example by sitting down himself. Soon the clatter of dishes and the sound of hearty mastication took the place of speech. The bottles were opened and the glu-glu of the wine as it was poured was added to the sounds of the feast. There was no dainty picking of food, or dawdling away of time. Every moment was made to count; and finally, when the oranges had disappeared and the last dish was emptied, Tonti leaned back with a sigh.

"I fear a late-comer will find naught but bones," he exclaimed, as he glanced at the table; then added, as he opened another bottle: "Good drink drives out bad thoughts."

"The first draught a man drinks ought to be for thirst, the second for nourishment, the third for pleasure," said La Salle, as he poured out his third goblet.

"A good meal is worth hanging for," was Pompon's verdict.

From all of which it may safely be assumed that they were well content.

"Success crowns our efforts so far," said La Salle thoughtfully. "Word came to me at my lodgings in the Rue de la Truanderie early this morning that His Gracious Majesty would grant

me an audience in the royal bed-chamber immediately after his *levée*. I went and received my commission, and here it is;" and, as he spoke, he pulled a document from his pocket. "Here, you see the beginning: 'Louis, by the grace of God King of France and Navarre, to our dear and well-beloved Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, greeting.' It grants all I asked for and more too. Listen: 'And we direct the Sieur Comte de Frontenac, our Governor and Lieutenant General, and also Duchesneau, Intendant of Justice, Police, and Finance, and the officers of the Supreme Council of the aforesaid country, to see to the execution of these presents; for such is our pleasure. Given at Paris this eighteenth day of June, 1678, and of our reign the thirty-fifth year. Signed, Louis.'"

"What more could you desire?" cried Tonti, striking the table with his iron hand and making the dishes rattle.

"Money," was the laconic reply.

"*Parbleu!* Pompon, we had forgotten," said Tonti, in some confusion. "Where is the twenty thousand francs we promised our leader only yesterday?"

Pompon, who had carefully separated that amount from their store, handed La Salle a bag containing it. La Salle looked somewhat surprised, but thanked them.

"The King has promised me a goodly sum," he continued. "The notary Simonet has loaned four thousand livres; the advocate Raoul, twenty-four thousand; Dumont, six thousand; my cousin François Plet in the Rue St. Martin, eleven thousand; my brothers and other relatives have stripped themselves for me. Now your twenty thousand added to some fourteen thousand Comte de Frontenac has promised me on my return to Quebec will make up the necessary sum. So you see now why I said that success crowns my efforts so far."

"What else is needed?" asked Pompon.

"Chiefly a commission for our friend Tonti," replied La Salle. "I have spoken to Colbert about it twice, and the King once. The Prince de Conti has also spoken to the King, so I have no fear of the result. I shall take you to-morrow to a *levée* at the Palais. You can then meet the King, and, I hope, gain an audience with him. You must plead for yourself, if you find he hesitates."

"*Certainement*, my tongue is as good as my sword when it comes to defending myself," smiled Tonti.

"You must needs look your best, too," continued La Salle. "The King likes to have even half-savage explorers appear well at court." And he glanced complacently down at his own correct

costume. "Besides, who knows what feminine bright eyes a fresh feather or a new doublet might attract?"

"*Dame!* What bright eyes could be attracted to a poor soldier of fortune like myself?" exclaimed Tonti soberly. "What the little sinners are after is a husband with both rank and wealth. They would have naught to do with one whose rank is that of captain, and whose *châteaux* and estates can be carried in one empty pocket."

"Courage, *mon brave*, courage!" cried La Salle heartily. "There is much hope for you yet. Look at me. What more am I than you? What less than I may be can you become? Are we not both on a footing? Behold fame and honor and riches for us both. We return to France. *Ma foi!* she has waited; she is ours."

Tonti smiled. "There is this difference between us, *mon Capitaine:* you evidently have found the One; I can see but the many."

La Salle seemed somewhat disconcerted at the interpretation put upon his words by his friend. He hesitated a moment before replying; then looking earnestly at Tonti, exclaimed:

"Come, *mon cher* Lieutenant, since we are to share our future fortunes, let there be no secrets between us. I have found the One. Years ago I left my native city Rouen to enter the service of the Church. I became a novice in the So-

ciety of Jesus. There was an attraction for me in that organization, spread like a network throughout the world. It symbolized to me that greatest of human achievements, Power. But this same administration of power caused my situation to become very galling to me. I saw the manifestation of power, but in the hands of others; I was subservient to it, not holding it within my grasp. I soon realized that to be moved, not the mover, to become the passive instrument of another's will, to surrender my own individuality and become but a part, an infinitesimal part of one great whole, would inevitably become intolerable. So before my vows were taken, compelled though I would be to surrender to them my patrimony, I withdrew from the Society and joined my brother in Canada."

"You have a brother there?" asked Tonti in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, the Abbé Jean Cavelier, a Sulpitian priest. Now, during all my religious training I was taught to guard myself against the seductions of the female sex; that women were but necessary evils."

Here a plate fell from the hand of Pompon, who was engaged in clearing off the table, and lay in a hundred pieces on the floor. "*Cuistre!*" he muttered, as he stooped to pick up the frag-

ments, "I did not know the priests taught as much wisdom as that."

La Salle did not hear, or at least did not heed the interruption.

"My early training still clung to me, until, falling ill with a fever while on a visit to Montreal, I was nursed, not by the nuns, but at the home of the former Governor and by his wife. Such gentleness and tenderness I had never known save for a far-off remembrance of my mother, who died when I was a small child. Then, too, her unselfish devotion and steadfastness to her husband, who was a surly brute, but who really cared for her in his own peculiar way, was a source of daily surprise and admiration. I took away her firm friendship when I left, and also a nature changed in that particular. The ground had been cleared, the soil prepared, and it only wanted the seed to be dropped."

"And while in Paris this time — " began Tonti.

"The seed was sown," was the reply.

"*Parbleu!* Good news this," cried Tonti, seizing his goblet. "Devil take me if I do not envy your ability to choose. To me each face is fairer, each eye is brighter, and each waist a trifle more slender in every pretty woman I meet, than the one before. He spoke truly who said that a beautiful woman was the hell of the soul, the

purgatory of the purse, and the paradise of the eyes. But come, raise up your cups in health to the future, shall I say, Comtesse de la Salle? — Nay, he would be but a selfish King who would reward your efforts so niggardly; he will be forced to make you a Duc. So, then, to the future Duchesse — "

La Salle raised his hand deprecatingly. "Not so fast, *mon ami*, not so fast. *Mon Dieu!* you will have me married and a grandfather next. Unfortunately, she knows nothing of my devotion, and I fear," here he lapsed into a lover's despondency, "would care little. It is this hope of winning her that spurs me on in my labors. To come back a hero and *un riche* is my desire. Then can I offer her something worthy her deserts."

Tonti, nothing daunted, replied persistently, "Her health," and mounting with one foot on his chair and his goblet raised aloft, motioned to his two friends to do likewise. Even Pompon seemed moved by his infectious exuberance, and he too responded, albeit with an air of superior knowledge. La Salle arose; the rims of their drinking-cups met. "Her name!" cried Tonti.

La Salle hesitated. "Not now," he said; "wait until we have left this sunny land of France behind us. Know her in the meantime as 'The Lily of Poitou.'"

"The Lily of Poitou!" they all exclaimed in unison, and a moment later three empty goblets stood together upon the table amid the remains of the feast.

After La Salle's departure, Tonti sat in his chair, his feet sprawling out in front of him, meditating. "*Dame!* if I do not begin to love that man," he cried, looking up. "I have seen him but twice, yet he somehow has reached out and gripped my heart already."

"*Certainement*," replied Pompon, as he approached Tonti and seated himself opposite. "But how *le bon Dieu* can permit such a brave, such a valiant *gentilhomme* to be so ignorant concerning women! But he will learn some day that that man never lived who was not fooled by a woman."

"And pray, *mon cher* Pompon, what experience could you have had with women, with your fourteen years in prison and the galleys, that you must needs pretend to be M. Know-it-all?"

"*Hein!* he who has once burnt his mouth always blows his soup. My forty-four years of life have not been spent without learning some lessons, in spite of my years in prison. One can learn much before he is thirty," was the reply.

Tonti, although surprised at thus learning the

man's age, was interested, and urged his companion to relate his experience.

"I have not much to tell you except that I have learned two things; and the first is that he who takes an eel by the tail or a woman at her word has hold of nothing. Like our friend, I was intended for the Church and was educated for admission to holy orders. I fell a victim to the charms of a girl, and, like our friend, believed all sorts of foolish things about her. I gave up my plans for a life of holiness and entered into trade with a merchant of Marseilles, confident in the words of faith she spoke. I returned in a year and found that she had run away with a priest, to my great undoing and the damnation of his soul. I came to Paris, saw a young woman who would be a help to me in business, and married her. She grew big and fat, and as she did so I learned the second lesson; that is, that a woman's tongue may be only four inches long, yet it can kill a man even six feet high. She took to drinking wine, which did not improve her temper. We quarrelled and she beat me. This scar above my left eye is in her handwriting. Finally, in desperation, after a terrible tongue-lashing, I stole away one dark night and lost myself in the city here. She still lives and has become a fish-woman. During my escape yesterday I saw her in the crowd; it was she who slipped the dagger into

my hand after freeing me from my bonds. She did not recognize me, though. It was the only kindness I ever received from her. So blame me not, *mon cher ami*, when I warn you to beware of a bad woman and put not your trust in a good one."

"*Peste!* You have some reason," was Tonti's reply. "If I were our good friend I should probably say that you had been unfortunate, and point out to you the virtues and excellencies of every woman I met. But, *ma foi!* I know nothing seriously against them, while any one but a blind man would be a fool not to admire their beauty."

Rising with these words, Tonti stretched his arms and yawned. "I must be off to get my new clothes in which to appear before His Majesty. How would a new baldric to support my sword, with a design worked in silver and pearls on the front, do? And boots of fine leather with ornamented tops pushed down to the ankle? And a doublet of gray or brown *à la mode* with lace about the throat? And a cloak of dark Venetian cloth? And three curled feathers for the hat instead of two? *Dame!* if I only look well enough I too may be moping around and telling you of the charms and graces of some fair Unknown. Ha, ha, ha! Keep quiet until my return; you will not know the butterfly."

And giving a military salute, he crowded down his hat upon his head and marched off with that swagger that only a soldier can learn and practice.

His errand took him from shop to shop, seeking what suited him, until he was some distance from home. At the last place he took off his old garments and directed the shopkeeper's boy to take them back to his room, and, donning his new acquisitions, he sallied forth for a stroll before returning to the Place de la Grêve.

The streets of Paris at this time were execrable, no attempt being made to keep them other than the receptacle for all the accumulated filth and refuse from the houses that lined their sides. The discomfort of the foot passengers was augmented by the puddles of water that collected between the paving-stones, many of which had been removed.

Tonti had turned into a neighboring street, which was abominably paved, and was engaged in gingerly picking his way so as to avoid both the dirt and water, when he beheld a sedan-chair slowly approaching him. The bearers were in livery, and the chair was of so fine a make as to indicate that the owner was a person of rank and wealth.

"Perchance some such chair contains *my* Lily of Poitou," muttered Tonti to himself; and as he did so, he smiled at the thought of his ever being

able to give up woman in the abstract for *a* woman, however beautiful.

While engaged thus, he did not hear the warning sound of horse's hoofs upon the paving-stones close behind him. It was only when this sound was accompanied by a harsh human voice that he turned quickly and leaped aside, as he saw a horseman riding at full speed almost upon him. He did not escape entirely, for the huge stirrup of the rider caught him a blow in the side that nearly overthrew him, while at the same time a shower of mingled mud and water from the horse's hoofs splashed over his new boots.

He sprang forward with an angry cry, his hand on his sword, in pursuit of the man whose carelessness had caused the accident. The blow in the side did not ruffle him half as much as the ruin of the boots he had paid two hundred livres for within the hour. The man turned in his saddle, and shook his fist at him, but did not slacken his speed. Wrapped as he was in a huge cloak, with his hat pulled down over his eyes, Tonti could not get a glimpse of his face. His cry, however, soon changed from one of anger to that of alarm and warning, for the man, still half turned in his saddle, and regarding Tonti with a menacing air, did not see that his horse was about to collide with the chair and its

bearers. He turned as he heard their warning shouts, but not in time to change his horse's course, who the next moment plunged into the first bearer, knocking him down, and dashed against the side of the chair with sufficient force to send it toppling over with a crash, despite the efforts of the bearer in the rear to prevent its overthrow.

The horse staggered, and finally stumbled, sending his rider sprawling on the pavement. He was not hurt, for he jumped up, and after his horse had arisen, climbed into the saddle and was about to go on, unmindful of the damage he had already wrought. Tonti, hearing a feminine scream from the interior of the chair as it went over, started to assist in righting it, but before he reached the spot the two bearers had already succeeded in doing so; then too, the sight of the doer of all this mischief about to make his escape changed his purpose, so not stopping at the place of the accident, he rushed on toward the horse and rider. He reached them just in time to seize the horse's rein, and hinder his further progress.

"*Diamine!* You insolent fellow, what mean you by running into me and overturning yonder lady's chair?" he cried, breathless from his exertions.

"Let go my rein, you flea-bitten cur," was the

insulting reply. "How dare you? I ride upon the King's business;" and, raising his whip, he made a move as though to strike Tonti across the face. Tonti saw the movement, and quick as thought had his sword-point against the man's breast.

"Make but one motion with that whip or one effort to escape and I shall spit you like I would any other carrion. King's business or no, you must first return and make amends to the occupant of yon chair, and then disclose your name and face to me, so that if you are not the street-scum your actions indicate you to be, I can have the pleasure of crossing swords with you. Come, about face;" and, so speaking, Tonti turned the horse's head and led both horse and rider back to the chair. Still keeping his sword drawn, he advanced to the window, whose curtain was down, and, bowing, said in a respectful voice:

"It grieves me truly, Madame, that this fright should have occurred to you, and I hope that you are not injured by the overthrow. Believe me, the cause of it shall be justly punished for his insolence. As the first step in that punishment I have brought him to you to force him, at the point of my sword, if necessary, to make due reparation to you and to uncloak his face so that I may know whether he is worthy for a soldier to meet upon the field of honor."

While speaking he involuntarily lowered his sword a trifle. The rider saw his opportunity, and suddenly digging the spurs into his horse, he jerked the rein from Tonti's hand, and as he passed struck him a stinging blow upon the cheek with his whip, saying in a voice filled with hatred: "Thus do I brand my dogs," and was gone at full gallop down the street.

At the first sound of the man's voice, the occupant of the chair gave another little feminine shriek, and as Tonti looked after the fleeing enemy, his cheek red and tingling from the lash, choking with anger at the insult, he was vaguely conscious that a corner of the curtain was raised and a pair of eyes were regarding him furtively. He must have been mistaken, for when he turned again the curtain was motionless.

"The wretch has fled. I, however, marked well his horse and shall search the city until I find it, and then its owner. I shall fight him with a greater joy now that I have his insult to you to avenge as well as mine own," he said gallantly, sheathing his sword and picking up his hat.

"I thank you, sir, for your assistance, but do not, I beg of you, fight with that man; he is an expert swordsman and a person without honor, who would take any advantage of you, so as he could kill you," came in half-abashed and faltering earnest tones from the interior of the chair.

The voice was that of a woman, young, refined, and presumably beautiful; at least a rare beauty should properly accompany a voice as rich in its modulations and as clear in tone as it was.

Some such thought flashed through Tonti's mind, as he bowed his head so as to bring it near the window, and spoke in a voice low enough to escape the ears of the bearers, who stood ready to proceed with the chair. "May I not be rewarded by a sight of the fair one I found in distress, and, like a true knight, have endeavored to relieve?"

There was no reply for a moment, then the curtains suddenly parted and he saw before him the smiling face of a young girl, whose beauty seized and thrilled him. Only a glimpse, and the curtains were again closed and the word of command given to the bearers. Tonti was in ecstasy and despair, when a small white ungloved hand appeared between the curtains. He seized it in one of his, and, bending low, kissed it. Another instant he stood hat in hand, watching the chair disappear around a neighboring corner, while in his grasp he held a dainty kerchief, in one corner of which was embroidered the letter "R."

He pressed it to his lips, and, noting the letter, exclaimed: "Mine is no lily; 'R' stands for 'Rose,' and, since the fairest are found in Normandy, I shall call her my 'Rose of Normandy' for want of a better name." And all through

that night a certain lodger in the Place de la Grêve dreamed of many conflicts and battles, all of which ended in his being victorious and standing on a high spot somewhere, drinking the blood of his enemies to the health of his "Rose of Normandy."

# Chapter Six

## A DARK CHAPTER, DEALING WITH A DARK NIGHT, DARK MEN, AND DARK ERRANDS

THE rain that had threatened during the day broke over the city at night, in an almost unparalleled tempest. The lightning played about the spires of Notre Dame and other churches, so that many beads were told and prayers offered for the safety of the city, in hope of warding off the vengeance of offended Deity. But there were many abroad that night on unholy errands who feared rather the Devil and his crew of demons than the thunder-bolts of Heaven. It was the age of Mystery and the Black Art, and many there were who, not satisfied with offerings made within the sacred edifices, sought how they might likewise placate and win the power and influence of His Satanic Majesty, *Monsieur Diable*.

Whilst the storm was at its height, about eleven by the clock, the figure of a man carefully cloaked against the rain and recognition might have been observed making his way along a street in that famous (or rather infamous) part

of Paris known as the Quartier Bonne-Nouvelle. He fought his way inch by inch against the force of the wind and rain. At times when he reached the partial shelter of a wall or projecting corner, he halted a moment to gain his breath or rearrange the cloak that the wind tried to deprive him of. He finally turned into a small street, the Rue Beauregard, that was almost deserted. He came to a portion that seemed to traverse a vast vacant space, void of all habitations save one. This one exception was a large mansion set back some distance from the street, its yard filled with trees and surrounded on all sides by a high stone wall.

A feeble light secured from the force of the wind overlooked a narrow opening in the wall, which was filled by a barred gateway. The man stopped beneath the light, which was ingeniously arranged so as to throw a shadow on whoever stood immediately below it. He hesitated a moment, and then pulled at a knob in the wall, which evidently communicated with a mysterious bell, for in a moment another light appeared in the hands of an ugly, cross-looking dwarf, who alternately scowled and leered at the visitor as he let him in.

The flashes of lightning rendered the services of the dwarf's torch superfluous, so he made his way rapidly toward the house without waiting

for his guide, knocked, and was immediately admitted. The brightness of the interior contrasted so strongly with the darkness of the night outside that the man was dazed for a moment. He was led into a small waiting-room and left to himself, amid a profusion of gorgeous furnishings that seemed strange in this deserted part of the city.

But there was reason for his finding his surroundings strange and terrible, for he was within the walls of the most infamous home of crime and villany in Paris. It was none other than the house of La Voisin, the celebrated sorceress, poisoner, infanticide; the Locusta of her day; the Toffana of France. Hither came the husband seeking to be rid of an aging wife by spell or poison, in order to espouse a more youthful beauty; the wife, longing for freedom from a rich but distasteful husband, or finding here a rendezvous with her lover. All classes of the aristocracy came as petitioners at the shrine of this arch-priestess of hell. Officers of the army desiring the death of those outranking them; magistrates, ministers of State, — all met on one common level of hideous crime.

Here, too, came the first women of the court in their sedan-chairs; duchesses, ladies-in-waiting, countesses, princesses, to gain their hearts' desire, with all the faith and earnestness worthy of a

better cause. Now one craved a love philter to overcome a lover's coldness or neglect; another some secret essence to preserve her youthfulness against the ravages wrought by the life of fashionable debauchery in which all lived.

In this den of infamy was celebrated the impious Black Mass, wherein the liturgical ceremonies of the Christian Church were travestied and degraded by devilish ingenuity; in which children one and two years old were sacrificed to Satan as at a heathen festival. There, too, came Madame de Montespan, and in an elaborate service, with impious priest and desecrated altar, rendered full homage to the Prince of Darkness, craving his aid to win for her the love of the King, the confusion of her enemies, and the gratification of her desires.

Within a small waiting-room, the visitor awaited his turn to interview the mistress of the establishment. He removed his cloak and hat, and stood revealed to an observer as a young man of twenty-five, tall, with dark hair and black overarching eyebrows which seemed to scowl continually. His face was smooth, save a few hairs on the under lip, which he pulled at nervously as he stood or walked up and down the floor of the apartment. His eyes were deep-set, and gleamed with the light of the unquenched fires of dark desire within their depths. His cheek-

bones rather accentuated the deep-seatedness of his eyes; a sensuous mouth betrayed the voluptuary, while a receding chin gave a mixed impression of instability and waywardness. A finely curved aquiline nose showed good birth, and hands, white and well cared for, demonstrated a life of idleness and pleasure. A certain air of ease and lack of self-consciousness in all his movements indicated association and even familiarity with those in authority. On the whole, he seemed a fair sample of the well-bred courtier of his day.

At length, just as a distant clock chimed twelve, a door opened and another dwarf appeared, and approaching him asked for his name.

"Le Comte de Miron," was the reply made in a low voice.

Again the dwarf disappeared, but returned shortly, and motioning to the young man, led the way into the adjoining room.

Here were found the same rich hangings and priceless tapestries. High carved chairs, their seats banked up with varicolored silken pillows, were arranged against the wall on three sides of the room. A dim light came through the centre of the ceiling from an unknown source, and was suffused throughout the apartment by means of glass prisms, forming a softened yet serviceable glow. In the middle of the floor stood a small

fountain of translucent marble, whose tiny jets of perfumed water rendered the air as agreeable to the nostrils as the other furnishings attracted the eye. The musical cadence of a lute, played by a hand invisible, always soft and low, but sometimes dying away to the finest attenuation of sound, greeted the ear of the newcomer. Across the further end of the room were stretched silken curtains. From behind these hangings issued a soft voice commanding the young man to advance. He did so, and knelt directly in front of the mysterious drapery. From his close proximity he discovered that the silk was almost transparent, so that the form of a woman could be faintly discerned, yet not with sufficient clearness to enable one to recognize her face.

"What seek you of the Powers of Darkness?" demanded the voice.

"I seek first, most powerful Priestess, a charm to win the hand of one, Renée d'Outrelaise, friend and companion of Mademoiselle, whose lovely person I desire. Next, the means for a sure and speedy death of a relative whose heir I am. And lastly, I crave thy aid to nerve my arm and protect my body in a duel I shall shortly fight with a foreign soldier."

"Truly, thy wants are many and great. What offering have you to make before the Devil's shrine?"

"Ten thousand livres;" and, as he spoke, he drew from his bosom a bag of clinking gold and stretched it forth. A hand protruded itself through the curtains and seized it. There was silence for a moment or two, as the priestess examined the contents. All seemed satisfactory, for in a moment the hand reappeared bearing a tiny charm of silk an inch square attached to a fine gold chain.

"Take this," was the command. "Gain but a single hair from the head of her whose hand you seek to win, inclose it in this silken bag, and wear it. Within a year the girl is yours."

The Comte de Miron seized the chain eagerly and placed it about his neck. Again the hand appeared from behind the curtain. This time it held a small phial containing a rose-red fluid.

"Drop one drop daily into your relative's wine. He will soon begin to droop and weaken, and before this precious liquid is used up he will die, and no leech can save him nor distinguish his malady."

The young man took the poison. A moment later the hand was again before him, this time holding two pieces of thin, strange-looking metal about the shape of a pistole.

"Sew these at midnight before the duel, one on your right sleeve to give your sword-arm strength and cunning, the other over against your heart to protect your body."

So saying, the voice ceased and the bits of metal fell into his outstretched palm. A slight noise at his elbow caused the Comte to start and turn in that direction, when he beheld the same dwarf that had ushered him into the room standing with his cloak and hat ready. He quickly donned these, and after being led toward the wall by his deformed guide, a secret door sprang open and an instant later he found himself standing in the Rue de Beauregard, with the rain still falling in torrents about him.

Through the same storm that broke about the head of the young Comte de Miron, as he went about his nefarious errand, another cloaked figure of a man might have been seen hurrying to a midnight appointment in another portion of the city. This person, too, feared neither God nor Devil. As he passed Notre Dame, he stopped a moment in the shadows, and looked up through the murk at the massive structure in admiration of the inherent strength and power that enabled it, inanimate though it was, to fling defiance to the lowering thunder clouds, and stand unshaken before the buffetings of wind and rain.

It must needs be business of great import that would take a human being out in such a storm. Whatever his object, the man's purpose never

for a moment wavered as he fought against the sweep of the drenching blast that he encountered while crossing the Pont Notre Dame. Turning and walking along the river-bank for a short distance, he finally entered a small and obscure cross-street. He proceeded along this, until he was directly in front of a dilapidated building situated in the rear of the Hôtel de Ville. Here he stopped and gave a peculiar whistle, which could not have been heard for more than twenty paces, because of the uproar of the storm. A dark figure, securely muffled like his own, appeared at his side, as suddenly and mysteriously as though he had come up through the earth. A sign was given and returned, and the heads of the two men approached each other, while their lips moved in some mysterious interchange of words.

All seemed well, for the first conspirator turned, and, opening a narrow door with a small key, disappeared, followed by the other. They felt their way along a pitch dark passage. Again a key was used, and a word of caution heard from the leader as they descended a flight of stairs into a subterranean way. This was soon traversed, and a door was reached, through whose cracks and keyhole a light appeared. This opened into a room built entirely underground and lighted by a large lamp. A table occupied the centre of the floor, and several chairs were scattered about. A

large brazier of lighted charcoal warmed the air and dissipated the moisture of the place. An opening in the roof leading to the outside world somewhere gave sufficient ventilation.

The door being closed, the leader threw off his cloak and muffler and advanced to the brazier, spreading his hands above the glowing coals with a slight shiver. At length he turned and showed by the lamplight the form and features of Jean Baptiste Colbert, Minister of Finance, the most powerful as well as the most energetic of the King's servants: of middle stature, rather lean than fat; black hair, so thin that he always wore a cap; of low and dejected mien, gloomy air, and stern aspect; eyes usually half closed, giving him the appearance of great craftiness; his outward behavior modest and accompanied by much seeming plainness and simplicity; sober, sleeping little, always alert; hard and inflexible of temper, beholding without concern the misery of an infinite number whom he had ruined to enrich his master's treasury, and hence advance his own interests. Nicknamed "The Man of Marble," he sacrificed honor, integrity, gratitude, and everything else for the benefit of his ambition.

His companion also removed the covering about his face and neck. His dress was that of a man of the lower classes, his face pale, sharply cut and ascetic. His manner toward his com-

panion was that of an inferior in the presence of his superior in authority. Colbert spoke first.

"A terrible night," he said with another shiver that convulsed his entire frame, and caused him to seek again the grateful glow of the coals.

"Truly, a fearful storm," replied the other. "But it is necessary for members of our Order to be about the Order's business *ad majorem Dei gloriam* in spite of the raging of the elements."

Colbert sat down in one of the chairs near the table, motioned to his companion to approach and dry himself, and after seizing a quill and drawing near his elbow the ink-horn and parchment that lay there ready for use, he commanded the other to relate his story.

"I left Quebec," began the Jesuit messenger, for he was none other, "in November and reached La Rochelle in January last. The day after landing I was seized with a terrible fever, contracted on board ship. When I recovered I found that two months had elapsed. I bore with me a message from the Bishop of Quebec, who, although not a member of our Order, is very friendly to it. I was instructed to deliver it to you in person and to avoid all help from the members of our Order in France, so that none would know that the Jesuits in Quebec were communicating with you. I started from La Rochelle penniless and alone. Deprived of the support

of my Order, I was obliged to beg my way. The fever left me with a running sore upon my leg. By exhibiting this to the passers-by, I was enabled to get the money to live on. A relapse confined me to bed for another month, when I had arrived within ten leagues of Paris. I sent you word requesting an interview; you appointed the time and place, and here I am."

During this recital, Colbert had watched the features of the speaker with a keen gaze, and now and then made a note of place and circumstance upon the parchment for future corroboration. When he had finished, he said coldly:

"You have done well. Where is the message?"

The man in reply bent down and began unwinding a heavy bandage from about his leg. The end reached, a huge open sore was disclosed below the knee. Inserting his little finger within the sore and pressing from the outside with his other hand, a small piece of lead the shape and size of a bullet was squeezed out from the wound.

"A safe hiding-place," he remarked, as he carefully wiped it; "besides, it served to keep the wound open and running."

Bringing the piece of lead to the light, he pulled the ends apart, which revealed a cavity neatly hollowed out. Within this hole was a

piece of very thin oiled silk rolled up into as compact a mass as possible.

Colbert opened it and spread it out. There was nothing visible on it, but he opened a drawer in the table, and, taking out a small flask of liquid, touched the surface of the silk lightly with a drop. Instantly a written word appeared distinctly and then faded away slowly. He seemed to be satisfied at this, so laying the message upon the table, he arose, and turning to the man asked if he were dry. His companion understood that he was dismissed, so, after bandaging up his leg and muffling his face, he moved toward the door, accompanied by Colbert, who followed him, opening the successive doors until he reached the street.

When he returned, he reseated himself, and, taking up the bit of silk, began the task of finding out what it contained. As he applied a drop of the secret fluid to each word he quickly wrote it down on parchment before it faded. Word by word he revealed the message until the end. Then putting the original away in a secret place, he took up the copy and read as follows :

"The chiefest among my Jesuit friends here have urged me to write this letter to you, promising that a trusty messenger shall deliver it into your own hands. They beg me to implore you to use your great power to retard and hinder the plans of the Sieur de la Salle, who is now in France. His projects of colonization and exploration

are in direct rivalry to the work of the missionaries of your Order, while the extension of his fur-trade with the savages takes them out of the power and influence of the Church. The fathers desire to keep the fur-trade to themselves, and feel that he, because of his well-known enmity to the Order, can do them great injury.

"LAVAL,
"*Bishop of Quebec.*"

In nearly every land of the then known world, in every court and palace, there were stationed secret emissaries of the great Society of Jesus. The minister of many a King, even the servants of the bed-chamber, the cloth-merchant, the inn-keeper, the horseshoer, the slavey in the kitchen, — all were enrolled among the faithful adherents of this mighty Order, forming one of its important sub-divisions.

Colbert was one of these. To render strict obedience he should have placed the welfare of the Order above every other consideration. But as has been indicated, the one great impulse of the man's life was ambition, that could use everything for an aid, but would allow nothing to overshadow it. The Jesuits were a terrible enemy, and a most valuable ally; hence he chose them as the latter, doing what he could to further their plans and win their esteem, so long as it did not interfere with his own projects. A serious clash of the two interests had never arisen before.

But now the issue must be met, for chief among his plans for the glory of France and of her King (and hence indirectly for his own aggrandizement) was the development and exploration of the western wilds of New France. Already were the Dutch and English and Spaniards pressing forward with men and gold, hurrying forth exploring expeditions led by men of courage and resource. He well knew that whichever nation first explored the unknown region adjoining the present holding of France in the New World; he who planted trading-posts and gained the aid and friendship of the savage tribes for his King and country, would win a continent.

The dazzling stories of wealth untold to be found in those regions stirred his blood, for he realized that if he could but guide and direct the King in the affairs of colonization to the grand realization of his dream, he would have but to ask, to receive his heart's fondest desire from the hands of a grateful monarch. Upon this pinnacle of power thus gained, the world would forget the wine merchant's son of Rheims in envious adulation. The reins thus placed within his hands, he would be enabled to drive rough-shod over his enemies, crushing them beyond recovery. He would be greater even than the King himself, because he would have acquired such unlimited influence over the royal mind and favor that it

would be he who would stand within the shadow of the throne, directing wars, dictating peace, uprooting nations, and dethroning kings. To gain this end, he had need of just such men as he knew La Salle to be. It would be he that would reap the benefits of the explorer's efforts if successful; and upon the head of that intrepid man alone would the results of failure fall.

Thus lost in the imaginings of future greatness, he sat until the dimming of the light warned him of the passage of time. He started up and, quickly secreting whatever papers he had in a hiding-place in the wall, he extinguished the lamp and left the room.

When he reached the street he found day already dawned. The rain had ceased, although it was still gloomy. The working people were moving about ready to begin anew the toil of the day. Colbert, well disguised, walked rapidly along, his mind busy devising some plan whereby his taskmasters could be satisfied without injuring his own future purposes. Once he came into sudden collision with a huge fish-wife while turning a corner, who straightway launched at him her choicest stock of Parisian billingsgate, little dreaming that he whom she thus reviled was the second man in the kingdom.

# Chapter Seven

## CONTAINING SCENES CHIEFLY FEMININE THAT TEND TO PROVE THAT PITY IS AKIN TO LOVE

IF the storm brought broken chimney-pots and puddly streets to the city of Paris, it bore renewed brightness to the flowers and a fresher green to the early summer verdure of the country outside; and to no spot did it bring newer life and greater gladness to flower and shrub than to Choisy Mademoiselle.

This princely estate lay about two and a half leagues from Paris on the road to Orleans. The broad Seine flowing past the lowermost of its terraces, the hundred-acre park about the house (a fair expanse of green turf broken here and there by the varied trees and bushes set out by the most famous landscape gardener of the age), the woods on either side trimmed into an exact resemblance of each other, made it seem a veritable glimpse of Paradise to the dust-laden traveller as he urged on his tired horse toward the city.

This was the favorite summer home of Louise de Montpensier, " Mademoiselle " (or " La

Grande Mademoiselle" as she loved to be called), only daughter of Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, the King's uncle; of her who was the greatest heiress in all Europe; who in her early youth had determined to be Queen of France, and had endeavored to win her kingly cousin into a closer relationship; who on the destruction of this dream turned her attention to the Emperor of Germany; who, at the time of the Fronde, had entered Paris, assumed command, and even turned the guns of the Bastille upon the royal army; who, in her day, had repulsed the wooing of Charles II of England (then in exile) and voted him a bore; and who ultimately, after refusing an Emperor, three reigning monarchs, Phillip of France (the brother of Louis), and half a dozen sovereign princes, married a rascally adventurer who forced her to pick up his hat and pull off his muddy riding boots, to show his contempt for her.

It was to this shady, restful home that she retired when the heat of summer came, to train her hounds, try her English horses, tend her aviaries, row on the river, or watch her flowers. Her other castles and estates stood high in her estimation, but none so high as Choisy. So well known was her desire for quiet when she retired there that not even the King himself would have ventured to intrude without a cousinly invitation.

Hither came by special favor a few choice spirits, Corneille or Racine to read a new play; Mansard to show her the plans for a new palace he was building for the King (Mademoiselle affected to patronize the arts); or perhaps a bevy of feminine friends brimming over with gossip of the court.

Mademoiselle was by nature a bundle of contradictions. Understanding politics, she had small capacity for ruling; ostentatious in the distribution of her wealth without being charitable; shrewd in judgment, yet so blinded by conceit that all the world looked on and laughed at her folly; of warlike disposition (a hundred times more a leader or a general than her father), yet with a woman's heart, and in her better, softer moments displaying a gentleness truly feminine.

Fairly good-looking she was, despite the long Bourbon nose; tall, shapely, with really beautiful hair; eyes blue, mouth firm, and a finely moulded shoulder. She had withal an air of command that bespoke royal blood. She was of the court, courtly; unbending only at times and allowing familiarity in none, save her lady-in-waiting, or companion as she chose to call her.

It was on this afternoon, when the whole earth was brighter for its plunge-bath of the night before, that a coach of state with outriders turned in from the road and stopped at the main en-

trance of the house. The footmen descended, the door was opened, and "La Grande Mademoiselle" stepped forth in all the stateliness a queen could show. With this regal air she entered the long gallery, whose satin-covered walls were decorated with portraits of her famous and illustrious ancestors. Passing its length, she entered a small writing-room, beyond which was the door leading to her own private apartments. Opening this noiselessly, she stopped and gazed long and earnestly at some object within. Gradually her expression changed. Her queenliness was gone, gone her majesty, and the womanliness which overcame but seldom her proud imperious nature clothed her as with a different garment.

The only occupant of the room was a young girl, barely nineteen, who reclined in an easy-chair near the open window. She was clothed in a white gown of thin silk, with gold stars and leaves in Persian stitch scattered over it; a pale pink sash was tied in a large knot below her bosom. She was tall and slender, with that grace of repose and freedom of action that is only gained by healthful country life. Her hair, light brown and fine of texture, rippled about her temples in a variety of natural waves, falling over her shoulders in long ringlets; eyes that showed a brown deeper than that of her hair;

soft lashes that partly veiled, partly displayed the glance within; lips thin, playfully curved, yet expressing moral firmness which could pout or pray as her emotion demanded, — a natural beauty, unmarred by folly or the decrees of Fashion. She was the embodiment of youthful vigor; vigor of body and health of mind. The soft glow in her cheek and the calm earnest look in her eye, a look that knew not evil, neither searched for it in others, both showed that she was not of the court or city.

This was Mademoiselle's constant companion, Renée d'Outrelaise, only daughter of a noble of Poitou, long of lineage, but poor in purse. The ambition of her mother for her daughter's advancement had led her, much against the old Comte's wishes, to send her to Paris to an influential friend, in order that she might become attached as lady-in-waiting to one of the royal household. Mademoiselle had seen her soon after her arrival and had taken her as her personal attendant.

Struck by the nobility of thought and character soon displayed by her protégée, she chose to keep her altogether from the noxious vapors of court life and allow the budding flower to develop uncontaminated within the bounds of her own presence. Her especial fear was that her royal cousin, the King, becoming enamored of the

freshness of her beauty, should seek to pluck this blossom for his own refreshment as he had so often done before. Hence it was that Renée followed her patroness from castle to castle as she in turn visited her different estates or accompanied her to Paris, where, lodged in Mademoiselle's city house, the Palace of the Luxembourg, she remained hidden from all masculine eyes, save those alone whom Mademoiselle deemed it prudent to admit.

A lute that she had been playing lay on a neighboring couch. Her hands, clasped above her head, grasped firmly the carved woodwork of the chair, while her feet were hidden among the silken pillows strewn about the floor. Her whole attitude was that of delicious, dreamy restfulness. Her eyes wandered listlessly over the trim lawns and the broad terraces balanced by flights of steps, over the statues and vases, glimpses of which could be caught here and there amid the varying greens of the shrubbery. Gazing at the jets of water rising out of marble basins, the precisely arranged flowers and orange trees lining the walks, she was but faintly conscious of their beauties, for her eyes followed her thoughts on past the park to the river-edge where the water-lilies grew in wild profusion under the shadows of the tree-enshrouded bays. Here they rested for a moment, then on and up to the horizon, beyond

which lay the great city with its noisy teeming life, less than three leagues away from this retired spot where all was quietude, order, and repose.

At length that strange consciousness that some one was looking at her exerted its influence over her thoughts, and she involuntarily withdrew her gaze from the window. She turned her head and beheld Mademoiselle standing in the doorway, watching her with a strange expression of mingled respect and affection; respect, because, reared as she had been in the atmosphere of the court reeking with that moral miasma that pervaded everything, she could especially appreciate the beauties of a feminine nature fair and unpolluted; affection, because in the young companion she saw bits of her own self when at her age: a certain proud consciousness of birth, a playful humor at times deliciously feminine, yet a nature capable of responding to the sterner duties of life. Then, too, with all her greatness and wealth, Mademoiselle's life had been essentially a loveless, artificial existence; hence in the companionship of this warm, affectionate young nature, the ever-living divine maternal element within her was satisfied by having something to love.

"Ah! *ma mignonne*," she exclaimed, as soon as their eyes met, "dreaming again! Happy indeed ought he to be who occupies your thoughts;"

and going across the room, she kissed the girl affectionately on the brow as she arose from her seat.

Renée blushed furiously at these words. Mademoiselle noticed her confusion with a start of pain, for in her selfishness she fondly imagined she could always keep her young friend with her.

"Why should the object of my thoughts be masculine?" Renée asked with a mischievous light in her eye. "Why could not those beautiful objects from the window, the trees and flowers and all, have held my fancy?"

"Wily deceiver," cried Mademoiselle, her anxiety and fears melting away beneath her companion's words, "young girls do not lie dreaming at sight of woodland and river; only one object of thought could bring the light I saw in your eyes when I entered, and that object is — a man;" and with these words she removed her head-gear, which Renée took and put away. "Come, tell me, *ma chérie*, what was in your thoughts. It will rest me after my ride. Then, perhaps, I can tell you news from town that will interest you. Let me see, we have gone thus far; it was a man. Now, who could it be, for you have met but few? Could it be the Comte de Miron, that young scapegrace?"

Renée had seated herself upon a footstool and leaned her head upon her protectress's lap, whose

fingers passed and repassed with a tender touch through the masses of her hair. At these words a look of disgust came over her features as she raised her head to speak.

"The Comte de Miron?" she exclaimed. "I detest that man with his smooth manners and eternal scowl. I do not believe that any one who is always scowling can be trusted. Besides, I am firmly convinced that he is base and rude and cowardly. No, no, *ma chère* Louise, my mind would have to change sadly ere I would sully it by thinking of him."

Mademoiselle looked displeased at the first words of her companion, for the Comte de Miron was a favorite of hers because of his dashing *insouciant* manner and ready tongue and wit. But at the sound of her Christian name on Renée's lips (the only person she allowed to use it) her face lighted up again.

"You are right, Little Wise-Head," she replied, caressing her. "He is no fit subject for your thoughts, although I cannot go so far as you and say that he is base and rude and cowardly."

"That he is base," replied Renée, "I learned from your own lips when you told me of his duel with the Comte de Noise, whose sword broke and who, disarmed and defenceless, was run through the heart by the Comte de Miron. That he is

rude and cowardly I myself learned when in the city yesterday."

"How now, *ma petite*," cried Mademoiselle in alarm, "I was with you nearly all the time myself while we were in town yesterday. Cannot I send you from the Luxembourg to Madame de Piene's in my own chair without your meeting with mishap?"

Renée then related her adventure of the day before in full detail, forgetting, however, the incident of the kissed hand and lost handkerchief. When she had finished she looked at her friend triumphantly and awaited her answer. Mademoiselle was thoughtful for a moment, then replied:

"That he was a gay and delightful sort of sinner I well knew, but that he could be ungallant or deal a cowardly blow I did not believe. However, I do not know but on the whole I am glad it happened. I have reproached myself much of late for my selfishness in having him about when you were near. He is wildly in love with you, and I feared lest——"

"Lest I should learn to love him simply because he was a man, and witty and clever?" —and the room was filled with rippling laughter as the girl gave way to the merriment her friend's speech had caused.

"No," she went on, suddenly becoming

serious, "the man I shall love, if such there be, must be brave; no descendant of Eleanor, wife of Henry Plantagenet, could ever love a coward. That he be of gentle birth I care not, although he must be i' truth gentle and gallant. He must also fear God and hate the Devil, although I would have him no monk. He must love me as no other person or thing on earth, and must woo me, not with soft words and sighs, but by deeds, with a reckless earnestness that shames to hide its love from any one, and which will seek every honorable means to gain its end. And last and best of all, he must be true; true to what he deems right; true to his God, his King, his friends, — and to me." She sighed as she stopped a moment. "And so I shall wait until he comes;" and going over to the couch, she picked up her lute and sang to a plaintive melody:

Until he comes! Cease, heart, thy troubled beating;
Reserve your strength for mine own hero's praise.
Cease, lips of mine, less worthy names repeating;
Peace, troubled soul, through all the coming days,
Until he comes, until he comes.

While she sang, Mademoiselle looked at her with a misty eye, for this sight into a nature which in depth and tenderness was so foreign to her own roused a strange longing and faintness within herself. She shook off this feeling as

Renée's voice dwelt lingeringly on the last words of her song, and laughingly said:

"*Mon Dieu!* Such dreams are beautiful, but if those are your standards, I have no fear of losing you, for believe me, *ma chérie*, there is no such man in France. But where got you your sweet song?"

Renée again blushed. "I wrote it this morning after you left for Paris. I was lonely. It is nothing."

"Tell me more of this strange knight," resumed Mademoiselle, "who so opportunely arrived to rescue Beauty in distress. Was he tall, dark, light, or fat, or what special mark distinguished the features of your champion?"

"How he looked I cannot describe to you," was the reply, "save that he was manly, of soldierly bearing, of high spirit, and his manner towards me was full of all gentleness."

Mademoiselle eyed her narrowly as Renée spoke. The earnestness or some other quality of the tones of her voice convinced her.

"I have it, *ma petite*. I have discovered your secret; it was of him you dreamed when I entered," she cried, clapping her hands and laughing heartily.

Renée's blushes only added to her merriment. "True, it was of him I thought," she replied with some spirit, "but my thoughts were rather

those of anxiety than those you imagine. I feared lest in the duel that will be fought, one more victim should be added to the list of the Comte de Miron's treacheries."

While speaking thus, the sound of an approaching horse was heard galloping along the avenue from the main road. A few moments later it stopped at the front of the house and presently a servant appeared. "A messenger from the Sieur de la Salle," he said.

"Admit him here," replied Mademoiselle. "As for you, Renée, you may remain."

Renée withdrew toward the window and Mademoiselle settled herself to receive the man, when the door was opened and Tonti stood before them. Bowing low with an easy grace, he said:

"The Sieur de la Salle sends by me his highest respect and salutation, together with this note," and he handed the missive to Mademoiselle, then stepped back a pace while she read it.

Renée was deeply buried behind a large book beside the window. She dared not look up, but at the first sound of his voice her heart seemed to stand still and the printed words danced in a blurred mass before her eyes. She recognized the sound.

Tonti's gaze wandered about the luxurious furnishings of the apartment. Suddenly he started

as his eyes fell in ready recognition upon Renée, and his hat fell from his grasp, while the muttered exclamation "My Rose of Normandy!" escaped him.

Mademoiselle, whose attention had been fixed upon her note, finished reading at this juncture and looked up.

"Tell the Sieur de la Salle I shall be most happy to grant his request, and that he may come to-morrow. When does he sail for those Northern shores and cruel savages the Jesuit fathers write so much about?"

"Some two weeks hence; from La Rochelle; by the ship 'Saint Honoré,'" was the reply, made precise and without polite embellishment by the agitated state of Tonti's mind.

"And you, Captain de Tonti, I understand from the Prince de Conti that you accompany the Sieur de la Salle, as lieutenant or partner in his enterprise. I wish you both success, because there is not so intrepid an explorer to be found as the Sieur de la Salle, and because you, as a gallant and worthy soldier, deserve it. Kindly carry my message to your friend, and accept my thanks in advance for doing it;" and thus speaking in her stateliest manner, Mademoiselle extended her hand, and Tonti, bending low to kiss it, bowed deferentially and was gone.

Hardly had the door closed and Mademoiselle

had scarcely time to lay aside her dignity when Renée sprang up, and, tossing her book high in air, came dancing across the floor, and, stopping before her astonished companion, gave one final pirouette and flung herself into her arms, crying:

"'T is he! 'T is he!"

"He? Whom?" asked Mademoiselle, puzzled at her words.

"The man of yesterday; the one you termed the stranger knight but a few moments ago."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mademoiselle, smiling, "Henri de Tonti. The wind blows from that quarter, does it?"

A flushed face met hers in earnest repudiation of all that her tones indicated.

"How foolish, *ma chère* Louise! Cannot I but feel grateful for his manly assistance without loving him?" Then with a hard effort to appear indifferent she continued:

"Would it be grateful in me not to feel anxious for him in his coming meeting with the Comte de Miron, knowing the Comte as I do? Did you not praise him yourself as a gallant soldier? Is it right to allow such to fall beneath a treacherous blow?"

"True," replied Mademoiselle musingly, "he is a protégé of the Prince de Conti, and has rendered marvellous services to the King in his Sicilian campaign, all of which Louis has forgotten

and now allows him to go to die in the wilderness." She then related the history of Tonti's iron hand and other of his gallant deeds she had heard. Renée listened eagerly, her eyes sparkling and her breath coming and going in short, quick gasps. Mademoiselle noticed this and stopped.

"I must tell you no more, *mon Dieu!* or I shall but add fuel to the flames this handsome Italian soldier has already lighted. Come, *mon bijou*, do not break your heart over him. He is about to sail, as you heard him say, with my friend the Sieur de la Salle, the great explorer, to New France, to be lost in some savage wild, or settle down, marry some Indian woman (they call them squaws, I believe), and disappear from our sight. However, to please you and for once do a good act, I am at your service to carry out any plan you may suggest to save our soldier knight, and to make it the more completely your own aid that you give him I shall place my most trusted servant and all that I possess at your service. Now I must see about the quarters for the new English horse that arrives to-morrow. Adieu, *ma petite*," and kissing her in a half-motherly, half-sisterly fashion, she left the room.

Renée, left alone, seated herself beside the open window, and burying her head in her arms she strove to think of some plan to save the man who but a few moments before stood in the same

room with her. The relaxation from her previous excitement was soothing, and the warm afternoon breeze caused a drowsy feeling to creep over her. Gradually her mind ceased planning, and with her song gently singing itself over and over in her ears, only with the words "At last he comes!" unconsciously taking the place of the original phrase, she fell asleep.

A cautious step sounded upon the gravel walk outside. A shadow fell upon the sleeping girl, who stirred uneasily as though she felt even in her unconscious state the approach of some evil spirit. The crafty face of the Comte de Miron peered into the apartment, and lighted up with a sinister smile as he recognized the sleeper and saw that she was alone, while with a deft motion of the hand he speedily cut off a lock of her hair and disappeared as mysteriously as he had come.

# Chapter Eight

DEVOTED TO NATURAL HISTORY, EXHIBITING THE LIFE OF COURT BUTTERFLIES, A GLIMPSE AT THE KING BUTTERFLY, AND HOW A SPIDER SPINS HIS WEB

IT was already past one o'clock when La Salle and Tonti approached the Louvre. On the Grand Staircase they were passed by several personages who hurried on without noticing them. Others followed behind more slowly. A steady stream of humanity flowed up the broad stairs and on into the Grand Salle; gay, laughing faces the most of them, with here and there the grave looks of a priest or the crafty countenance of my Lord Cardinal. Gallants a-plenty in rich attire; soldiers fresh from the field with bold glances for the women, and a haughty stare and a hand touching the sword-hilt for the men about them; here and there an officer of the King's Guards; ladies of the court with hair dressed *à la hurluburlu*, cheeks marked by the rouge-pot and the patch, and gowns of rarest beauty and extravagant cost. Here too came Racine, the tragic muse of his age; Boileau, the Horace of France; La Fontaine, the trifler in

words; and Madame de Sévigné, whose virtue and literary talent were destined to immortalize her name when those of the many beautiful women of this infamous court who far outshone her in witchery, wit, and wickedness would be preserved only in the mildewed pages of some long-forgotten chronicle of the day.

It was through such a crowd that La Salle and Tonti made their way and mingled with the throng that filled the Grand Salle. His Majesty dined alone in his own apartment at one end, and it was to behold him and bask in the royal presence and perchance gain the royal ear or the kingly smile (depending on the sex of the person), when he appeared for a time in public before he retired to his cabinet to take up affairs of State with his Minister, that this gay company had assembled. La Salle bowed right and left, for his own star was in the ascendant and he had many friends. Tonti, too, recognized a few of his acquaintances in the crowd, to whom he nodded or spoke a few words.

Slowly they made their way to the right side of the Salle, where, between two windows overlooking the fosse, Madame de Montespan, the reigning favorite of the King, held her court. About her crowded statesman and soldier, wit and court beauty, knowing well that to gain her influence meant the favor of the King. She was

clad in a gown whose skirt was of silver tissue, embroidered in gold touched with flame-color, with coat of Gros de Tours also richly embroidered in gold. Her hair was dressed in numberless curls (one on each side of the temples falling low on her cheeks), tied here and there with black ribbons, to which the magnificent pearls, once the property of the Maréchale de l'Hôpital, were attached. A mantle of gold d'Espagne partly concealed one dimpled shoulder, leaving the other without cover. Her arms were bare to the elbow, and encircled above by a gold open-work bracelet set with opals, while gloves of cream-colored Brussels lace covered her forearms and hands. Right royal did she appear in all the refulgence of her voluptuous beauty; the envy of every feminine mind; the shrine before which each masculine heart bowed.

The two men, first on the outskirts of the crowd, gradually worked their way toward the centre of attraction, listening to the conversation of those they passed.

"Women are rakes by nature and prudes from necessity," remarked La Rochefoucauld in a low tone and with a significant glance at Madame de Montespan.

"True, most women prefer that we should talk ill of their virtue rather than ill of their wit

or their beauty," smilingly replied Fontanelle, the young nephew of Corneille.

"For good reason," rejoined La Rochefoucauld. "Are not beauty and youth as necessary to a woman as the air they breathe and the wine they drink? Is it not valueless to a woman to be young unless pretty, or to be pretty unless young?"

"What angels beautiful women appear to be," sighed Racine, joining the party, "and what demons they really are, who make us enter hell through the door of paradise."

"Say, rather, that man is fire, woman tow, and the devil it is who comes and blows," gloomily remarked the Abbé Guyart.

"You will agree with me, Sir Abbé," laughed La Rochefoucauld, "in saying that man, woman, and the devil are the three degrees of comparison. Or perhaps you would put woman last?"

Before the priest could make reply the voice of Madame de Montespan was heard calling to them:

"What are you conspirators talking about that you speak so low we cannot hear you? Let us, too, share your jest, or benefit by your wisdom."

"I have just said," replied La Rochefoucauld unblushingly, "that there were few women whose charms outlive their beauty, but that your wit,

Madame, the famous wit of the Mortemars, would yet charm the world were your unsurpassed beauty to fade and become but equal to that of other women."

Although he was a moralist, La Rochefoucauld was still a courtier.

"And I had but remarked previously," spoke up the young liar Fontanelle, "that, in the words of Francis First, of gracious memory, 'A royal court without women is like a year without spring; a spring without flowers.'"

The person to whom these speeches were addressed smiled sweetly upon the speakers, for all flattery, however gross, was as a sweet-smelling incense to her nostrils.

"And you, Sir Explorer," she said, looking at La Salle, who now stood with Tonti within the inner circle, "what does your experience teach you to say upon this subject?"

"My experience in New France, Madame, has been mainly among savages. The word 'woman' is always associated there with the word 'marriage.'" Then, seeing by the frown upon the beauty's face that he had committed an indiscretion, he added, "But there beauty and wit are unknown quantities, and marriage is synonymous with servitude."

"That condition is not confined to *New* France," replied Madame de Montespan, with a

bitter emphasis upon the "New." "What says your friend from Italy, the land of romance and beauty?"

Tonti, to whom these remarks were addressed, replied:

"A soldier, though from Italy, has scant time to form opinions on subjects that belong to the domain of the court. Although as to marriage," he added, with a smile and twinkle of the eye, "I seem to remember a saying we have in Tuscany: 'Before going to war say a prayer; before going to sea, say two prayers; before marrying, say three.'"

A burst of laughter from the group greeted this reply, but before anything else was said a whisper passed about the room, "The King!" and in a moment the crowd surrounding his favorite had parted, leaving an open way, down which he passed.

Before them all he stood, the chief puppet of the play; backed by the strength of armies whose advance meant destruction, yet weak as water beneath the caress of a mistress or the wiles of a crafty minister; spending hours each day in prayer and cowering before the admonitory finger of a priest, yet the most polished voluptuary of his court; shrewd almost to cunning in his country's diplomacy, yet blinded by an egotism so great that were his bitterest enemy

also an accomplished flatterer, he and that enemy would be friends ere sundown.

He was clad in a rich velvet coat with amazingly wide skirts; brocaded waistcoat reaching half-way to the knee; satin small-clothes and silk stockings; silver-buckled shoes that came nearly up to the ankle, with red heels four inches high; an immense wig, covered with flour, upon his head; a three-cornered cockaded hat, a gold-headed cane, and diamond-hilted sword. He endeavored to move with dignity, but he walked with a strut, elbows sticking out, rolling eyes, and out-turned toes. A King indeed he was, yet at once the strongest, weakest, grandest, most ridiculous monarch of all Europe.

He had advanced half-way toward his favorite, who was ready with a smile to greet him, when he suddenly stopped before one of the company who was clad in the prevailing mode but all of his garments were black, in strange contrast with the peacock colors all about him, while large bands of crape about the arms and stockings made him a prominent figure amid the otherwise brightly gay throng. He was the husband of Madame de Montespan.

The King frowned. "Why all this dark array and black looks, Marquis? For whom have you donned such heavy mourning?" he demanded.

"For my wife," was the reply, as the man gazed steadily into the eyes of Louis and then looked at Madame de Montespan, who was turning white with anger. The King flushed, bit his lip, then without a word turned upon his heel, and, walking to the door leading to his cabinet, disappeared.

La Salle and Tonti moved toward the door as the company, except those who had appointments with the King, began to disperse.

"I fear the royal temper will not be greatly sweetened by this incident," remarked the former dryly.

"*Pardieu!* I like the Marquis' courage," exclaimed Tonti by way of reply.

They had waited but a few minutes when the door opened and their names were called. They entered the King's cabinet and found him seated at a long table littered with papers; near by sat his Minister Colbert, while in a window's embrasure on the further side of the room stood the Minister's secretary with his back to the rest of the company, gazing out upon the street.

La Salle and Tonti advanced and stood at a respectful distance. All look of annoyance had left the King's face as he addressed them.

"So, Sieur de la Salle, you have brought your lieutenant with you for his commission. I recollect him well. 'T was he that displayed such

gallantry in the Sicilian campaign. I have also heard the story of his iron hand; a brave deed bravely done. Also of his actions before Messina, his imprisonment and all."

"'T is naught, Sire," was Tonti's reply in a deprecating tone. "The knowledge of your appreciation of my efforts to serve your Majesty, together with the captaincy and the three hundred livres I received, are ample rewards."

Louis looked at the speaker sharply, as if to determine whether the irony he fancied he detected in the last words were real or not.

"There were other rewards given him which he has forgotten to mention," said Colbert, in a hesitating tone. "It is not usual for foreign officers to occupy the responsible positions in the royal forces that he has held. That of itself ought to be distinction enough. Your Majesty has just asked me for my humble opinion as to the brave Capitaine's commission. Like all of my opinions, it would be worthless, but I should not recommend the signing of it."

Under the cloak of humility, the wily Minister threw such a tone of meaning that Louis instantly demanded his reason.

"A thoroughly selfish one, Sire, but natural in one devoted to your interests. Have we too many officers whom you can trust as you do this brave Italian? Would you not, in your anxiety

to please the Sieur de la Salle, be robbing yourself? Could not so gallant a soldier best serve the King by remaining in France? War is again imminent, and it will not be long ere the Capitaine Tonti will have another chance to perform other gallant deeds and reap rich rewards."

The King seemed struck by the argument advanced; the more so as it appealed to the selfish side of his nature. He bit the end of his pen a moment, then throwing it down before him on the table and pushing the commission to one side, he turned to Tonti. "True words indeed," he said, "and ones that but echo my own thoughts. We have need of strong arms, clear heads, and loyal hearts in our service. We think, on the whole, Sieur de la Salle, that you can find a fit lieutenant for your enterprise without taking from us our true and tried officers."

La Salle was about to speak when Tonti, advancing a step and with a meaning glance at Colbert, thus addressed the King:

"He indeed, Sire, speaks truly when he says that there were other rewards given me which I forbore, not forgot, to mention; rewards received from the hands of an ambitious and unscrupulous Minister rather than those of a grateful and generous King."

"How now, Sir Capitaine!" angrily interrupted Louis. "We like not to hear such words concerning our Chief Officer of State."

"Pardon, Sire," replied Tonti. "Soft words are not always true ones. The rewards referred to I shall enumerate in a moment if you have the patience. My father brought me here a child. He found a great King reigning over a mighty kingdom with an empty treasury. He devised a plan for the filling of that treasury. You would not permit him to carry it to conclusion; you intrusted it to the unskilled, ignorant hand of your Minister; it failed. He studied the plan more carefully and saw the merit of my father's minute advice, hitherto unheeded. He tried again; he succeeded; and now his successor sits here the second man in France, while my father, to whom all was due —"

"Was amply rewarded," interposed Louis, "and went back to Italy to live in well-deserved comfort his remaining days, dying in peace shortly after his return."

"No," bitterly explained Tonti with a menacing glance at Colbert. "That was probably what his lying tongue told you. Ah! Sire, the life of a loyal soldier was ever mine. Through the years of rough campaigning, through siege and sortie, camp and fleet, I performed those deeds that you have graciously enumerated, and returned home to find the father who ought to have been loaded down with honors awaiting the arrival of his soldier son fresh from a hundred battles —"

Tonti stopped an instant as though to gain control of himself. The King was listening earnestly. Colbert sat with a disdainful smile upon his lips, and a venomous look in his eyes.

"To find the father whose skill in finance and gratitude to the monarch that received him, an exile, had given you the means of conducting a glorious war and gathering fresh laurels that can never fade; that father who deserved as his reward the half of your kingdom and a place at your right hand; who taught me 'Fear God and honor the King' as the first whole sentence my young lips framed; — to find, I say, that he had been housed in the Bastille since my departure; that he had died alone and in prison; died a victim to the cruelty and neglect of his gaolers. Tell me, Sire, is that the way to reward a faithful servant? For my own reward, paltry though it was, I do not complain; but now when I come to you loaded down with this gross injustice and wrong and beg a favor such as the present, am I to be refused? Nay, this is a favor I now beg, ask, yea, more than that, demand of you. It is not the days of fighting, the nights of vigilance, the dangers met and passed, the cords that bound these wrists in captivity, the loss of this hand," — here Tonti struck the table with his gloved hand, causing a sharp metallic sound, — "and the shame at having chosen an ungrateful King to serve

that cries to you now from the mouth of a humble Capitaine, — it is more! It is a voice higher than the voice of Kings, louder than the mandates of a throne: it is the voice of Eternal Justice calling to a great monarch, one who believes himself to be just, whose kingly nature cannot afford to be ungrateful to even the meanest of his subjects."

King though he was, Louis delighted in a brave man, even though he were opposed to him. The better nature of the monarch was stirred at such evident injustice at his hands, so, instead of being angry at Tonti for his plain speaking (strange speech indeed for royal ears to hear), he turned sharply toward Colbert.

"Your explanation," he demanded curtly.

"You will recollect, Sire, that after the failure of the elder Tonti's plan, you were very much enraged, feeling that he had deceived you, and desired his name placed on the list of those liable to have *lettres de cachet* issued against them?" said Colbert in an insinuating tone, as though fearful of showing the King the fault of his own doing. "In some way his name was not erased, and in due process of time you yourself signed one for him; he was apprehended, confined in the Bastille, and died, not by cruelty of those who cared for him as his son suggests, but by his own hand. Some one else must have told you

the story about his retirement to Italy. I have never heard it said."

The King looked at his oily-tongued servant long and suspiciously, but such was the confidence placed in him and so great was his influence over the royal mind that Louis finally withdrew his gaze, and muttering, "I must have signed it without looking at the name," he seized a pen, and taking up the unsigned commission before him, interpolated a few words and hurriedly wrote the word "Louis," then handed it to Tonti, saying:

"Shame on an ungrateful King! Accept this commission as a partial return for your own wrongs. In it I have added several privileges additional. As to the injustice to your father, believe me, Louis, who loves to be called 'the just,' will watch over your endeavors in the New World and reward them tenfold, making up to the son in some measure the wrong suffered by the father at my hands. Go, and may success be yours, and let it be known that he who opposes you strikes at the King."

Tonti received his commission in silence, and after bending and kissing the royal hand, left the room. La Salle at a signal from Colbert remained. Louis buried himself in a lengthy document. Colbert called to him his secretary. He was the Comte de Miron. White with rage, the

Minister whispered or rather hissed into his ear: "Did you see that man who just now left the cabinet?" The Comte nodded. "Kill me him within twenty-four hours!" The Comte glided out by another door. Colbert then wrote on a piece of paper he took from his portfolio the following letter to Laval, Bishop of Quebec:

"Your messenger has arrived, and I am pleased at the reports you make of the religious health of the colony. Your various requests shall be complied with. I recommend to you especially the bearer of this letter. The Sieur de la Salle has my confidence and love.

"COLBERT,

"*Minister of Finance.*

"PARIS, June, 20th day, 1678."

He smiled as he wrote, leaving a large space between the lines. He had prepared the sheet the night before, having written a message in sympathetic ink, so spacing the lines that they would fit in between those just written. The hidden message ran:

"Beware of La Salle. It is not within my power to hinder his departure. Delay not his plan to find a way to China, but in aught else, or if the way be once discovered, oppose him. Thwart especially all his efforts at trade.

"Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam,

"COLBERT, S. J."

After sealing and directing it he handed it to La Salle, with the words: "By your favor: for the Bishop of Quebec."

Meanwhile Tonti waited for his friend in the Grand Salle. Not more than twenty people remained, chiefly gathered about Mademoiselle at the farther end of the room. He joined them, and listened as Mademoiselle related the incident of Renée and the accident to her chair. During the recital he worked his way into a position near her elbow. When she had finished he asked in a low tone and with forced indifference, "And who might the fortunate cavalier be who came so happily to her aid?"

"She did not speak his name." Then in tones so low that only Tonti could hear, she added, with a spiteful gleam in her eye, "But she recognized him. It was the great explorer," then turned her head away. Tonti was dazed. There was only one great explorer, and how she could have confounded himself with La Salle he knew not. Smarting with hurt pride and disappointment, he looked across to the other side of the group and saw the lowering face and hate-filled eyes of the Comte de Miron, and in that glance he recognized his antagonist of the day before.

"A contemptible dog that," he said, looking

steadily at him, "who would subject a lady to such indignity and alarm; worthy only to be spat upon."

The topic of conversation changed, and Tonti, a prey to a mixture of emotions, wishing to be alone, sauntered slowly away from the circle where he had been. A moment later a hand was laid upon his shoulder and a voice deep with passion exclaimed:

"You may have an opportunity to spit upon the contemptible cur you mention, Sir Capitaine, or be appropriately spitted by my sword;" and at the same instant a gauntlet was thrown at his feet.

Tonti looked up, and seeing it was the Comte de Miron who spoke, carefully brushed away at the spot on his shoulder where his fingers had rested, and replied contemptuously:

"You know the recent edict of the King against duelling; you are safe in your offer."

The Comte flushed. "Drive in a coach to-morrow at noon along the Chemin de Clamar; I shall meet you coming from the other direction. Our drivers can be instructed to collide opposite Mont Parnasse; we can leap forth, and with the collision as a pretext we can fight as though it were a sudden matter. No seconds need be present, so that none may know."

"I accept," exclaimed Tonti, picking up the glove.

"With swords?" asked the Comte.

"With swords."

"*À l'outrance?*"

"To the very death."

# Chapter Nine

## DESCRIBES A ROADSIDE MEETING, A WARNING, AND A FLIGHT

WHEN Tonti had breakfasted the next morning he explained to Pompon the nature of his drive, and ordered him to have a coach waiting for him in front of the Louvre at eleven o'clock. He then sat down and wrote a letter to La Salle, explaining everything, leaving to him whatever share of the buried treasure Pompon was willing to give him, and wishing him well in his explorations and expressing sincere regret that a question of honor had come up for settlement just as they were about to start. He sealed and addressed it, with instructions to Pompon to deliver same in case of his death. He then divested himself of a portion of his clothing and practised for a full hour making passes, feints, and guards, so that his joints and muscles would not be stiff when the time of need arrived.

Pompon, who had been sent to order a coach, not having returned, and it now being a few minutes before eleven, he left a note of farewell

for him on the table, and, girding on his sword, placed the handkerchief with the letter "R" upon it within his bosom and left the house. Luckily he had brought his cloak with him, for he found upon reaching the street that a fine rain was falling. At the Louvre he found a coach waiting, and he was soon rolling across the nearest bridge, through the Porte Dauphin, along the Rue du Four and into the Rue de Chasse Midy, then past the establishment of Les Religieuses du St. Esprit to the Chemin de Clamor. By this time the city was left behind, and they drove through a sparsely built suburban region, back of the Convent des Chartreuses. The open fields in this quarter were favorite duelling grounds, especially those about a slight elevation of ground called Mont Parnasse, which they now approached.

Knowing that the carriage containing the Comte de Miron would soon meet his, and that the collision which was to be the pretext of the duel was imminent, he withdrew the handkerchief from its hiding-place and kissed it gently before returning it. Then having loosened his sword in its sheath, he awaited the end impatiently. Presently he heard the warning shouts of his driver, mingled with oaths and imprecations from another tongue. A few seconds later came a shock that almost threw him from his seat. The coach stopped,

and, alighting, he found the vehicle with which they had collided on its side in the ditch, with the Comte de Miron climbing through its open door, his face spattered with mud and his temper not improved by the knowledge of the appearance he knew he must present.

Together they walked across the field some fifty paces' distance from their carriages, Tonti's driver accompanying them to render any assistance needed in removing their outer garments, while the other remained with the horses. The preliminaries being arranged, the two men faced each other.

"*En garde!*" cried the Comte de Miron between his teeth.

"*En garde!*" came from Tonti in calm and measured tones.

The swords touched, crossed, and the fight was on. Both learned in a few moments that neither had a weak opponent before him. Each tried the other with all the commoner thrusts only to find him ready with a parry. At last Tonti, in order to tire his antagonist and thus make it easier when he next attacked him, maintained the defensive only. His thoughts wandered away from the scene before him and he seemed to stand in the same room he had visited yesterday, gazing upon the face that he realized now that he loved. Only, instead of her eyes follow-

ing the printed pages of a book, they looked into his own with a friendly gaze. But as he looked they suddenly changed and a gleam of terror and horror filled them, as though they saw a terrible sight, and her hand was raised as though in warning.

At this instant the Comte de Miron pretended to slip, and Tonti involuntarily raised his sword-point to enable him to recover his footing. The look of terror in the face of the one he loved brought him suddenly back to a full realization of his surroundings. But it was too late. The Comte, counting upon the honor and generosity of his foe when he perceived his misstep, and seeing the point of Tonti's sword raised, made a sudden lunge, a twist and upward movement, and Tonti's sword was hurled from his hand and lighted point downward in the earth just outside his reach. Then Tonti realized his danger, for his foe, with unrepressed hatred gleaming in his eye, made for him as he stood unarmed and defenceless before him. It was but a second's duration, but Tonti's thought flew back to the street where they had met and he heard again the voice he loved cautioning him against the treachery of the man before him. He saw the loved eyes quiver yet gaze at him admiringly as he met his death bravely and without flinching. Fully realizing the impossibility of escaping assassina-

tion, he resolved not to shrink before his treacherous foe, so with a look of contempt in his eye and the words "For you, my Rose" in his heart he awaited the impact of the deadly weapon.

Just as the end of his enemy's sword was about to enter his breast, the clicking of other steel was heard and the point was struck up harmlessly in the air. Tonti's driver, who had stood very near during the combat, seeing his plight, had suddenly dropped the cloaks he was holding, and, drawing a sword from the depths of the great-coat in which he was muffled, had parried the blow. "Wretch!" he said contemptuously to the Comte de Miron. Tonti with a spring recovered his sword and returned to the attack. Before, he had had but little heart in the battle, meaning only to inflict some trifling wound, knowing that were he involved in any mortal combat the chances would be that Colbert would seize that as a pretext for detaining him, despite the King's protection, and La Salle would have to sail without him. But now, blinded by the fury aroused by the vile trick of his opponent, he attacked him with all his skill and strength.

"Before I count ten, M. le Comte," he said slowly, "you shall die;" and beginning to count each stroke, he pressed his antagonist hard, reserving a half-forgotten trick of the sword, learned in Italy, for the final. The Comte de Miron re-

sponded with equal fury of attack and defence, but as he heard Tonti count so confidently and saw the smile of triumph on his face he weakened, and the sacrilegious charm he wore seemed to burn a bright red spot in his chest as a sign to Tonti where to strike.

"One!"

A spark flew between the blades.

"Two!"

The sword play became more furious.

"Three!"

The combatants shifted their positions continuously.

"Four!"

The breathing of the Comte de Miron grew shorter and more rapid.

"Five!"

His thrusts became wilder and his face flushed, in strong contrast with the coolness and precision of his opponent.

"Six!"

A terrible oath escaped his lips as Tonti calmly turned aside a quick stroke on which he had counted much.

"Seven!"

His attack weakened, and he glanced out of the corner of his eye to see if Tonti's driver were near enough for him to suddenly seize and pull the man in front of him to receive the fatal blow

in his body, knowing that before Tonti could withdraw his sword he would be at the Comte's mercy.

"Eight!"

The base plan was impossible of execution, as the driver now stood far to one side. He then thought of escape by flight, gaining one of the horses and fleeing to the city. There were no seconds present to witness this cowardly action and he could easily bribe the two drivers to discredit any version Tonti might give of the affair. This, too, he perceived was futile, as Tonti stood between him and the road where the horses were standing.

"Nine!"

All hope was now gone and a nameless terror seized him. That cursed charm burned still brighter over his heart. He vaguely thought of throwing away his sword and falling on his knees to implore mercy from his foe. Had this plan occurred to him when he was still himself, calm and reasonable, he might have done so, but now, with his brain a-whirl and the shaking fear in possession of him, he judged Tonti by his own standards of honor and believed that he would in turn assassinate him in cold blood even as he had attempted to do himself but a short time before. His last hope was gone. Perhaps the charm would save him yet.

"Ten!"

A cry of fear broke from him and with it came a last appeal to Satan for assistance.

At the word Tonti executed the stroke he had planned, his foe's sword was turned, and his own sword-point running along inside his guard entered his breast above the heart, and he sank to the ground with a groan, while a red stream gushed from his mouth and chest.

"Dead dogs do not bite; still, this is bad work, *mon ami;* we must leave quickly," said a familiar voice; and Tonti, looking into the muffled face of his driver, recognized Pompon. Before they could say anything further the driver of the other carriage ran up and presented a note to Tonti. It was written in a feminine hand and ran as follows:

"The death of the Comte de Miron will be promptly avenged. You must flee at once without returning to the city. Obey whatever the bearer of this note suggests."

It was unsigned. Tonti was suspicious, so, handing the note to Pompon, he questioned the driver, endeavoring to elicit from him some information as to the identity of the writer, but it was of no avail.

"I was to tell you that behind yonder clump of trees you would find two horses. Take them

and set out for Etampes. Take this ring, and when asked by any one to show it, produce it and you will be helped to La Rochelle and kept in hiding until your ship sails. Surrender it when you reach the end of your road to whomsoever asks for it. Further than that I cannot speak, but I pray you make haste."

Pompon approached during this speech.

"His advice is good. If it is treachery we can but be caught. If we return to the city we shall surely not escape. I prefer the chances of treachery in the open country to a certainty of the Bastille in Paris. It is better to make conditions in the brush than in prison. Thinking some such emergency might arise I brought some of your clothes, our supply of money, and a few things for myself. They are under the seat of my carriage. I shall get them."

Tonti finally yielded, and the two leaving the dying man in care of the agent of their unknown friend, they proceeded in the direction pointed out. Behind the trees stood two magnificent English horses, all ready for the road, with provender for beast, and food and drink for the men attached to the saddle, while on one was tied a little bag of money to provide against emergencies.

"We shall return this at the first relay," said Tonti, as they swung into the road at a good

gallop. "*Ma foi!* I do not object to using a stranger's horses to make my escape, but I will not touch his gold."

"Judging by the fodder for the horses, they think that there is urgent need of our not losing time by stopping to feed them. We have ten leagues before us and that means five good hours of saddle work. However, with another man's horses and your own whip one can accomplish a great deal," was Pompon's advice.

As they warmed to their task, the horses showed their splendid breeding and staying powers. On they went all the afternoon through the heavy rain that had closed down upon them. Towards dark the signs of approach to a town, much larger than the villages they had passed through, warned them of their first halting-place.

Just before crossing a small bridge two men sprang out and seized both horses by the bridles; at the same time each presented a loaded pistol at their heads.

"We want no money, gentlemen," came a gruff voice from one of them, "we need jewelry. Have you any rings about you?"

Tonti looked at Pompon, who nodded. He then handed the ring which the Unknown had provided them with to the speaker, who took it, and, after disappearing to some nook where

he had the means of making a light to examine it by, returned in a few moments.

"They are the ones," said he to his companion, as he returned the ring to Tonti. At this the bridles were released and the men removed their hats. "You must be in Orleans by morning," the leader said respectfully. "Wait here and refresh yourselves with the food and wine you have with you. We shall return shortly, bringing fresh horses."

In due time they were on their way again on new mounts, feeling heartened by the wine and food consumed. On through the drizzling night they went, Pompon showing a strange familiarity with the road whenever any question of that character arose.

Thus they advanced, showing the talismanic circlet whenever required and receiving in return fresh horses, a hiding-place to sleep, and different disguises, so that their progress could not be traced. On they fared through Blois, Tours and Chinon, Loudon and Parthenay, and over the mountains to Fontenay. Here their mysterious ring procured them a guide, who conducted them by a roundabout way, avoiding the city of La Rochelle itself, to the coast, and along the water's edge to a cave worn by the waves out of the rock, where they could overlook the harbor and see the ship "Saint Honoré"

that was to bear them to new lands riding at anchor not half a league away. They watched it day by day, as boat-loads of provisions, cannon, soldiers, and passengers were taken out and placed on board. Their faithful guide remained with them, going out at night for food and for information relative to the progress of the vessel's lading. Thus passed several weeks, and they were beginning to weary of their confinement when news came that La Salle had arrived and that the vessel would sail at the turn of the tide the next evening. Their guide also learned that a thorough search of the ship had been made for them by the soldiers, and that a final visit would be made before dark.

At length the day darkened and the night came on. A small fisherman's boat that had been at work all the afternoon near by, drew in towards the shore as night fell, and soon a signal from their ally brought it close to them. Tonti surrendered the ring upon request and sought to repay their guide, but as in all the other cases, he refused the offered money. So helping them into the boat, he waved a good-bye from shore, as they fast disappeared in the darkness.

The boatman pulled hard at the oars, and they soon found themselves nearing the ship. A few lights on her decks served to render the confusion existing there visible, but they were not bright

enough to illuminate the waters about the vessel, while the noise of departure — her anchor was already raised and her small forward sails set — made a cautious approach unnecessary. At last they found themselves directly under her stern, and the rippling of the water warned them to hasten ere she got fully under weigh. By the advice of the boatman, Pompon, agile as a cat, swung himself up on to a small swinging scaffold that had been used in painting the stern of the vessel, and had been overlooked in the hurry of sailing, with a small leather pouch tied to his body that he had brought with him from Paris. Tonti then handed up his sword, and with a parting boost from the boatman soon found himself crouched alongside Pompon. A fragile, swaying seat it was indeed, but safe, for they would not dare to climb to the deck above until the vessel had cleared the harbor.

Thus did three men sail on the "Saint Honoré," parting from the sunny land of France with diverse emotions. In the stern stood La Salle, looking back at the fast-receding lights of La Rochelle, murmuring the words of that plaintive song of Mary Stuart as she sailed from Calais:

> "Adieu! oh plaisant pays,
> Adieu! oh ma patrie,
> La plus chérie, qui a nourrit
> Ma belle enfance — adieu!"

Yet tinged as was his mind with regret at leaving civilization and the new love that had arisen in his heart, he still looked forward with eagerness to the great task before him. All was secondary to this. For this he lived; for this he would die.

Shivering in his cramped position on the swinging stage below him, a little man with scarred face and crafty eye shook his fist in triumph at his escape from the land and the woman that had both used him so ill.

Another man beside him, as the tacking of the ship brought the distant lights in view for the last time, stretched towards the shore a hand trembling with a new and sweet emotion, as he murmured: "Adieu! my Rose, until we meet."

# Chapter Ten

WHEREIN A SEA IS CROSSED, A SECRET IS DISCOVERED, AND TONTI RECEIVES A BLOW

THE lights were soon gone, but still the silent figure of La Salle remained on the poop. Pompon, seizing a rope, soon raised his head above the level of the rail. So wrapped in thought was La Salle that he took no notice of him until he had reached the deck. Then startled at the sudden noiseless appearance of a human form so near him, he stepped back a pace, and, drawing his sword, demanded who it was.

"Save your sword-thrusts for your enemies; use them not on a friend," replied the figure.

"What! Pompon's voice!" exclaimed La Salle, as he seized his hand in great delight. "Pompon's face!" he added, as he peered anxiously through the darkness. "*Mon Dieu!* I was thinking of you and Tonti but a moment ago. Where is he, for surely you are together?"

"He is taking a last view of the shore-lights from his private balcony. Perhaps he has fin-

ished," was the reply; and leaning over the rail, Pompon gave a low whistle. In a moment Tonti had clambered up, and soon all three were engaged in an eager conversation.

"I had given you up for lost," said La Salle. "All Paris was whispering of your duel with the Comte de Miron and his death. But all was mystery. He had disappeared, his body no doubt secreted by his coachman; you too had disappeared, having fled to England it was said; while Pompon, whom I searched for diligently, was nowhere to be found. The King was inclined to be vexed over your disobeying his order concerning duelling, but I think he was secretly pleased at getting rid of the Comte de Miron, whom he disliked. Only the influence of Colbert kept him about the court."

Thus did the partners in the firm of M. Tonti and Company hold their first meeting outside France, and the night was far spent before they finished recounting their adventures and laying plans for the future. No light was thrown upon the identity of their mysterious protector, and the matter was finally dismissed as a riddle to be solved at some later day.

There was plenty of time for the full discussion of their plans, for the "Saint Honoré," although a stanch little craft of a hundred and fifty tons, was driven from her course by contrary winds,

and drifted through many lazy days for lack of any. The passengers consisted of a party of soldiers sent to swell the available fighting force to be used against the Indians; a flock of thirty girls travelling under the care of Madame Bourdon, all seeking homes and husbands in the new strange land across the sea; ship-carpenters and workers in iron, for the need of building small ships to trade with the Indians and explore the coasts had been emphasized by Frontenac in his letters to the King and Colbert; stone masons and builders to help the settlers erect their homes as well as build new forts; adventurers, escaped exiles, and political refugees, seeking under new names to travel in the King's ship, and then lose themselves in the savage wilds. Among these were some thirty men whom La Salle had tempted by goodly sums and far goodlier promises of riches to be found in the New World, and tales of mystery, and of untold wealth that only needed daring hearts and hands to secure it; some were honest artisans whom he needed in his explorations, especially to build ships on the lakes. For this purpose a store of iron, cordage, and anchors was carefully packed away in the hold.

La Salle and Tonti kept to themselves, but Pompon went about the ship making friends with every one in spite of his ugly face, busying

himself in finding out everything he could from each person, amusing them, but telling nothing in return. He diced with the soldiers and adventurers, and spun yarns with the sailors derived from his experience in the galleys, but carefully disguised, he himself usually figuring as a brave officer in command of one of His Majesty's ships; the women folks he sedulously shunned.

The three spent many evenings in La Salle's quarters because they were much roomier than the rest, and over their wine they gradually revealed much of their past lives to each other, and grew in *camaraderie*, and the bonds of good-fellowship were knit more tightly. During one of these hours Pompon, who always used his eyes to advantage, spied a letter on the floor, dropped unconsciously by La Salle while looking over his effects. The written surface lay uppermost, and as it lay Pompon recognized the writing of the hated Colbert. Carefully he placed one foot upon it, and later, pretending to drop his cap, he picked it up, together with the letter, and secreted it in his coat.

Retiring to his own cubby-hole, he unscrupulously began to open it without breaking the seal. A little heat and a sharp point of a dagger were all that were necessary. A little more heat and careful pressure would seal it up again afterwards. A look of disappointment appeared

as he read the letter and noted its friendly tone, but as he read the word "Colbert" his pupils contracted and a look of ardent hatred and cunning shot from them, and he again noted the paper carefully, holding it up to the light at different angles, but to no purpose. At length, his suspicions confirmed by the wide spacing between the lines, he opened his leathern pouch, and taking a little powder, he mixed it with water and carefully let a single drop fall between two of the lines. A cry of triumph escaped him as the words "La Salle" appeared clear and distinct in the blank space. Hastily summoning Tonti, he told him what he had done. Tonti reproved him sharply, but Pompon defended himself with the argument that the knowledge of the hidden message might determine the success or failure of the entire expedition, and finally gained his consent to a further examination of the letter.

"*Ma foi!* the end justifies the means, as our friends the Jesuits say," he exclaimed.

Together they went over the letter until all of the hidden words had flashed out their secret message and disappeared.

"A man warned is half saved," was Pompon's only comment as they finished their task in silence and looked into each other's eyes. And then and there was born in the mind of each the first realization of the dangers and difficulties

for their comrade and themselves; a realization for the first time of hidden foes and secret peril. Then, too, came into each heart the first resolve to watch over their leader with a care and cunning equal to that displayed by his foes. And thus between them all a new bond was forged that was to bind them together and make them comrades and brothers all.

Long that night the two conspirators tossed in their sleepless bunks, weighed down with the mysterious message they dared not reveal to their companion. Above them La Salle wrote in a letter to the Prince de Conti he was preparing to send back by the first outgoing ship when they had reached Quebec: "Capitaine Tonti's amiable disposition and honorable character have been well known to you. For me, I am just learning to appreciate both. The man draws me as a brother, and I have learned to love him as such. I would trust him even to the uttermost; more than I can say of any other man. May *le bon Dieu* grant us success! But whether or no, I believe we shall rise or sink together. As for his companion whom you have not heard of before, he is a man of infinite resource, and, albeit a rascal, I believe him true to us."

A mass of rolling water encompassed them about. Each little wave laughed and sparkled beneath the sun's first kiss in the early morning;

each little wave donned its white nightcap as the wind freshened after the sun went down; each little wave with its tiny strength urged on the ship. And so the summer days were filled with light and the nights with the moon's sheen upon the surface of the water or the myriad reflection of the stars that guided the ship's course through the long lone watches.

The gray twilight and the first half of the night were often spent in conversation by the three explorers on the poop just outside of hearing of the helmsman. Then it was that La Salle told of his early life: of the days spent among his Jesuit teachers; of the first voyage to the new land; of his early efforts to penetrate the wilderness; of the life and history of the colony; of the rivalry between himself and the Jesuit missionaries and their followers for the fur-trade with the Indians and the efforts they made use of to thwart his plans. At times the genial side of his nature showed itself in the recital of amusing incidents of the court, at Quebec, in the camp.

One night it was Tonti who related some of his experiences in his various campaigns, contrasting the humane treatment the sailors of the "Saint Honoré" received with that accorded to the unhappy galley-slaves who urged on His Majesty's galleys to victory or sank with them, chained to the oar, in their defeat.

"*Ma foi!*" exclaimed Pompon, "and the whip! I have the stripes of many a blow upon my back yet."

"Yes," replied Tonti musingly, "I remember one act of greatest cruelty. I was once in command of a galley; yet I saw but little of the men below decks. One day while walking where the poor devils sat chained to their benches I came upon an officer of the ship striking one wretch with a leather whip to which were tied little pieces of metal, sharp and cruel, that brought the blood after even the lightest blow. The fellow was accused of shirking his work, but it was from sheer exhaustion as I well knew, for their only food was —"

"A mouldy biscuit soaked in weakened wine," murmured Pompon.

"Yes, some such non-supporting diet," resumed Tonti. "The officer had loosed him from his seat and dragged him to the open space between the rows of benches, the better to have room to swing his lash. As I approached I found the poor wretch, half fainting, fallen upon one knee, while the brute with the whip had lashed his face so that a deep red gash extended from the top of his head down across his forehead nearly to the nose and —"

"His eyes were blinded with the blood flowing from his wounds," suggested Pompon.

"True," replied Tonti, "yet he would not ask mercy, but, half insensible as he was, he — "

"Cursed his oppressor and taunted him to do his worst," again Pompon interposed.

"He did indeed," cried Tonti admiringly. "Slave as he was, he had no fear. I was sickened and angered at the sight, and I approached the officer — "

"Upbraided him for his deviltry, struck aside the whip, and with one blow of your iron fist sent him tumbling forward, the great lumbering ox that he was, until his face was smeared with the captive's blood upon the boards and his own ran freely. *Mordi!* but it was a blessed sight," went on Pompon, taking up the narrative.

"Yes, but — " began Tonti in astonishment.

"Then you called for assistance, and before it came you bathed the wounds even of a slave, and ordered wine and strengthening food," replied Pompon fervently.

"How — " exclaimed Tonti and La Salle together.

"And forbade such treatment in the future. Ah! *Mon Dieu!* but they did not forget you and your kindness, and when the next engagement came they toiled for you willingly without need of whip, until the blades bent, cracked, yes, more, for he whom you aided put all his strength into your service — and broke his oar."

"*Cospetto!*" cried Tonti. "You were —"

"The beaten slave," rejoined Pompon. "And you were my deliverer! A curse upon these eyes of mine that took one look and vowed they would ever recognize you. But I have felt since our strange meeting in your garret that there was somewhat in your face that stirred my recollection. Verily, your services have made my account so great I can never hope to pay you. Through all the years of my imprisonment I have wished to learn the identity of two persons. The one, my accuser, I found and avenged myself that night at Ecouen. The other, my savior, I have now discovered. Capitaine Tonti, you found me then an unwilling captive; from this hour I here renounce my allegiance to my King and transfer it to you;" and kneeling before the astonished Tonti, he seized his hand and pressed it to his forehead in token of fealty and servitude.

Tonti quickly raised him. "Nay, not so," he said, touched at the man's gratitude. "We talk not of slaves who, having escaped the old, seek now for the new. Your bravery while a bondsman won my admiration. Let me find you as brave and true a comrade, fellow-worker, friend."

Thus passed the days until full two months had gone and the summer winds had changed to September gales. Already the floating sea-weed

and screaming birds told them that land was near. One night the three sat listening to the sound of wind and wave. Tonti was silent, while his companions talked. The master of the ship had been commissioned to bring over a lute and several other musical instruments for the Comte de Frontenac. It was this lute that Tonti had borrowed, and, heedless now and then of the flagging conversation, he idly picked out some old forgotten strains upon the strings, his thoughts far distant.

At length Pompon left them. La Salle, after a few moments' silence, said:

"*Mon Dieu!* you are a man of accomplishments, *mon ami;* a soldier and a musician. It needs only that you become a poet and the three great arts will be found combined in one man."

Tonti smiled. "We once toasted your Lily of Poitou," he said. "Listen, now, while I tell you of my Rose of Normandy. Perhaps if you will but forget the singer, you may be pleased like I am with the subject of my song." So saying, he played a few chords and began to sing to an old Italian air:

Whilst poets celebrate in rhyme
Some comely maid of high degree,
The praises rare I 'd gladly sing
Of Rose, my Rose, of Normandy.

The sunbeams nestle in her hair,
Her lips are wondrous red to see,
A roguish glance beams from her eye,
The eye of Rose of Normandy.

Sweet thoughts and pure possess her mind,
From earthly dross and blemish free;
An earnest purpose fills the soul
Of Rose, my Rose, of Normandy.

Within the empire of her heart
I fain would reign its king to be;
But other hands I fear will pluck
This Rose, my Rose, of Normandy.

"*Bravo!* Monsieur Poet," applauded La Salle. "Would that I had your gift of rhyming. I fear my sober monastic training destroyed any latent talent I might have had. If I could I would sing to you in return the charms of my fair one."

A silence ensued, broken only by the creaking of the ship's timbers, the shrilling of the wind through the rigging, and the sound of rushing waters as the vessel careened on her course. A falling star shot its tiny spark across the heavens; the muffled sound of human voices came up from the interior of the "Saint Honoré"; the ship's bell announced the arrival of midnight.

At length Tonti aroused himself from his revery and spoke to his friend, who in turn was

unconscious of his surroundings, so great was the power of thought over his physical environment.

" Do you recollect our first meeting, *mon Capitaine*, how you promised to tell me the name of your lady when we had once left the land behind us? Perhaps although your rhymes be faulty, one could learn something of her from your prose."

" True, *mon ami*, but words, even though they be not those of poesy, would utterly fail to describe the person of her who has entered my life but recently, but whose angelic presence I trust shall remain with me forever. But I shall spare you all rhapsodies. She whom I call my Lily of Poitou is a daughter of a noble of that province; her name, Renée d'Outrelaise. She lives with Mademoiselle as a companion and friend. So far she has not been seen at court, but keeps close to her protectress, and is visible only to those honored few to whom Mademoiselle chooses to show her; for all of which I am thankful. The Princess as a patroness of the Arts and Literature has been pleased to interest herself in my explorations and has invited me on a number of occasions to rehearse to her my adventures in New France and relate all that would interest her about the land and its inhabitants. Mlle. d'Outrelaise has been present at

most of our interviews, and it was while thus engaged that I realized that a new strange feeling had arisen within my heart, a feeling that men lightly call love, but which I recognize as an inspiring, ennobling influence that means much more to me."

La Salle, not noticing his companion's silence, continued :

" Mademoiselle has known by reputation some of my relatives and connections and thinks highly of me as well as my projects, and I know approves my suit. Renée has never shown aught in her demeanor that betokened a return of my affection, nor have I ever spoken words of love to her, partly from my lack of courage and partly from the fact that I have seen her alone but once. I feel safe in her retired life, believing Mademoiselle to be my ally; besides, she is young yet. If I but accomplish what I hope to do, I can return in two or three years with honor, power, and wealth and claim her for my own. She will be guided largely in her choice of a husband by the Princess's counsel and wishes. I saw her the day I left Paris, and our parting interview augered well for my hopes."

" How so? " asked Tonti in a hard strained voice.

" I detected evidences of long weeping in her eyes ; she was agitated beyond measure, and ex-

pressed the warmest wishes for the safety and success of my expedition; and best of all, after I had kissed the hand of Mademoiselle in adieu, she permitted me the same privilege, and gave me as a parting remembrance a silken flag of France worked by her own fair fingers."

The approach of Pompon cut short any further speech from La Salle and permitted Tonti to withdraw to another portion of the ship, a prey to the deepest emotion. As he stood by the rail and looked across the tumbling, surging mass of waters which a rising storm had quickened, he felt in full sympathy with its tempestuous nature. And when the rain fell and the wind became a gale and the vessel bobbed about on the water, he still retained his post, oblivious of the outer tempest, engulfed as was his spirit amid the waves of jealous alarm, unhappiness, and despair.

Here was a blight upon his new-formed hopes; the man whom he had promised to serve as companion and friend, the one to whom he warmed as never to mortal man, was now an unconscious rival. In the first onrush of the tempest that stirred his passionate nature he hated him, and cursed the day they first met. Were not the glory and honor and riches that were just ahead on the explorer's path sufficient but that he must take his love, she whom he

realized was all in all to him, too? And the melody of the song he had sung with its closing words, words written in a moment of joy and hope, that were in reality full of pathetic foreboding, passed through his mind again:

> But other hands I fear will pluck
> This Rose, my Rose, of Normandy.

But when the tide of feeling had reached its full, then came the calm before the ebb. The soldier's sense of justice showed him clearly that his friend was innocent of any desire to work him harm. That he really was the interloper, for La Salle had known her for weeks and months, while his acquaintance was but that of a day. And the strong feeling of remaining stanchly loyal to his commander, even though it meant to take sides against himself, came to his rescue. Then, too, the careful recollection of the two short glimpses he had had of the fair lady showed him but too plainly that he had small grounds of hope on which to build.

On into the early morning watches he struggled with himself. The love of a man for a woman battled strong with a man's love for honor and that which he deemed the right. And lo! a paradox appeared, for in the strife although honor won, yet in no wise was his love for the woman conquered or belittled by the strife,

but rather was it enlarged, illumined, and made stronger still, for he could at once give full allegiance to his love and yet resolve that come what might he would in no wise be false to his friend; that he could glorify and worship the one and keep this secret hid from the other; could aid his companion with all his strength and leave the future to *le bon Dieu*, who controls every man's destiny. The battle once won, he could look forward with the hope that by being true to both now, his reward would somehow be forthcoming when the work was done. And as the first morning rays touched the ship's deck they fell upon the figure of a man, not worn out and fatigued by a night's struggle and exposure, but firm and erect, gazing toward the new land but one day's journey distant, with the light of faith and hope and love in his countenance; and the greatest of these was love.

That night three goblets were filled to the brim and emptied and filled again. Three manly breasts responded to the thrill of a common lot, a common joy, a common purpose. Three hands clasped fealty with hands that gripped them fast. They pledged the King, the ship, New France, the expedition, and last of all, themselves.

"To three gallant comrades," cried La Salle when the last bumper was raised, "who will to each other be true —"

"And faithful," added Tonti, in a voice vibrating with deep feeling.

"Even unto death," said Pompon gravely.

Thus ran the toast; so drank they all.

# Chapter Eleven

WHEREIN ARE MET A NEW WORLD, AN ALLY IN HIGH PLACES, AND A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT

A DULL, dark day; an unfriendly wind, necessitating frequent tacking of the ship; the lowering of clouds that now and then swept down upon them, enveloping everything in mist; the cry of water-fowl unseen; the sharp, scared glance of gulls that suddenly appeared from out the fog, only to veer abruptly away and be swallowed up again; and then the uplift of the hazy curtain, and the sight of a dim low line of coast with shadowy suggestion of vast mountain ranges on the horizon's rim; — this was their welcome to New France. As yet no indication appeared to show them they had left the ocean and were ascending the mighty stream that drained a continent. But finally, when on the near approach to the northern shore a glimpse was caught of the trading-station at Tadoussac, the weary passengers first realized that their journey was nigh ended. All crowded to the rail and strained their eyes to feast them

on the land of their dreams, the harbor of their hopes. The three comrades stood beside the captain as they watched the sun's first rays light up the beetling rocks of Mal Bay. All day the glad sunlight and the clear breeze dried the ship's sails and warmed the hearts of all on board as a panorama of hitherto unknown beauty, painted by the hand of Nature, was slowly unrolled before their wondering eyes.

The river gradually narrowed, and soon both shores were brought within sight of all. Waterfalls fell like trembling white ribbons down the barren mountain-sides; the rising smoke from wigwam and seigniory betokened the presence of man; the yellow strip of stubble-fields from which the grain had been harvested followed the shore between the water's edge and the mass of evergreen verdure of the interior.

At length, after passing through the northern channel between the island of Orleans, edged with houses and clearings, and the mainland shores of Beaupré and Beauport, the good ship glided into the quiet bay, while the towering heights of Quebec, puissant stronghold of a new country, the comely mistress of all this fair land, the goal of the entire company, smiled grimly down upon them. The promontory, crowned with fort, churches, seminary, and convent, looked indeed the mighty, silent bulwark that it was. Soon

was the silence broken, for as the vessel let go her anchor and fired her salute, a puff of smoke came from the fort and the long, deep boom of cannon sounded clear in the early autumn air, while from the flagstaff on the Château St. Louis a white banner, spangled with fleurs-de-lis, waved official welcome to the King's ship.

A score of canoes shot forth from the shore and surrounded the "Saint Honoré," their occupants eager to hear the news from the home country and to see the faces of the newcomers. On board everything was in confusion, as one and all prepared to exchange their cramped quarters for the liberty of shore life. At length all were ready to land and assembled themselves on the deck. Just then came stealing to their ears the sweet tones of the Angelus, hushing the noisy throng as they knelt, softened by this homely welcome that brought the tears to more than one eye as it minded them of the far-distant Norman coast or field of Picardy.

As the canoe containing La Salle and his companions approached the landing-place they could see it filled with a welcoming crowd. Foremost among them stood the Governor, the Intendant, and members of the Council, together with the chief men of the town. As La Salle stepped ashore the Comte Frontenac met him with a friendly smile and hearty grasp.

"*Bienvu, mon cher* La Salle! Welcome again to Quebec and all New France," he said.

"Thanks, M. le Gouverneur," was the reply. "*Ma foi!* but I like not the rolling ship and long voyage. Give me rather the canoe and paddle again, with the shore always in easy reach and a sheltered spot on Mother Earth in which to sleep or stretch my limbs before the supper fire. But I forget; I have made new friends since I saw you and have brought one, stanch and true, with me." Thus speaking, he presented Tonti. Then turning to a man who stood with a lowering brow, biting his lips as he watched the hearty exchange of greetings between the two:

"Ah! and you, how has it fared with M. l'Intendant Duchesneau? And you also, Bizard, and little Barrois too? *Par Dieu!* man, but you have grown shorter since I left."

The party started up the narrow street, Frontenac and Tonti leading the way, asking and answering all manner of questions relating to the King, the court, and the army. Behind them walked La Salle (bowing now and then as he caught sight of a familiar face in the crowd), together with Barrois, the Governor's secretary, and Bizard, lieutenant of his guard; Duchesneau, after responding to La Salle's greeting in a half-hearted sort of way, remaining behind

to see the other passengers and receive whatever dispatches the ship had brought from the King.

The city was divided into an Upper and a Lower Town, the former occupied by the Government officials, soldiers, priests, and nuns, while the latter (consisting of one long street taking up the space between the river's edge and the foot of the bluffs) was made up of the homes of traders, sailors, and a few Indians and fishermen. The ascent to the Upper Town was made by either of two ways; the first, a passage with steps cut in the rock, while the other, over which the Governor now passed, was a steep street lined with houses. As they walked slowly along, the passers-by saluted the Governor with deference, and stopped to gaze at the faces of the strangers. A little beyond the Episcopal Palace, Frontenac paused to gain his breath and await the arrival of the others. "A long climb, *hein*, *mes amies?* Come with me to the Château; you are to lodge beneath my official roof."

Bizard and the secretary withdrew, and the rest proceeded toward the left across the Place d'Armes and soon stood in front of the Governor's house. They were all silent. The late gleams of the sun were rapidly disappearing, and as they stood the long twilight of this Northern latitude passed slowly into night. Afar, the opposite shore was dimly visible; beneath lay the bay, with the newly

arrived ship lying quietly at anchor; while two hundred feet below them the chimneys of the Lower Town, on which one could almost toss a pebble, gave forth their smoke as the evening meal was prepared. A few lights twinkled in the houses, and soon multiplied. The song of the sailors making merry at the taverns with their Norman cider and wine of Gascony rose to their ears on the night breeze. All three were lost in thought, and as each gazed upon the scene before him, removed his hat as though in reverence.

At seven o'clock La Salle and Tonti were ushered into the apartment designated by Frontenac when he left them. The walls were of oak and the high ceiling showed the rafters blackened by the smoke that poured from the fireplace when the wind came from the northwest. Above this fireplace were hung the large, branching antlers of a moose, used as a hat-rack by the worthy Comte. A number of pictures brought from France were decorated with strings of varicolored wampum entwined about their frames, while a red blanket or a pair of moccasins were attached to the walls here and there, giving a bright touch of color to the otherwise gloomy interior. The swinging cressets that furnished from overhead a light much feebler than that emanating from the blazing logs, showed in one corner an old tarnished corselet and some steel

pikes, while in another a massive carved desk and chair betrayed the official character of the room. In the centre of the floor carpeted with many skins stood a heavy table, set with snow-white napery and polished silver. Three high-backed chairs denoted the number of the expected diners.

While warming themselves before the fire (the autumn nights were chilly an hour after the sun went down) and gazing at the mixture of civilization and barbarism about them, Frontenac entered the room, and soon all were engaged with hearty appetites at their evening meal. They talked freely of the plans for the fur-trade that La Salle hoped to be able to build up. Frontenac, as a sort of partner in the enterprise, offered advice and gave his views frankly on all subjects discussed.

After the last course was finished and they had seated themselves before the open fire, with the fragrant tobacco smoke wreathing its way above their heads, La Salle turned to the Governor and asked:

"And now, *mon ami*, that we have told you all we know about the Old World and its court, how fares it with the court under your sway?"

"Badly," was the reply, as Frontenac relighted his pipe and puffed at it angrily.

"How so?" queried Tonti. "Do not the wheels of the machine of State run smoothly and without friction?"

"Scarcely," was the reply, and the Governor and La Salle exchanged an amused smile. "But listen, and I will tell you. The Intendant watches me like a jealous cat and does what he can to irritate me. He sends lying reports back to the King and Colbert; says, *parbleu!* that I seek to belittle him and his office; that I alter the King's commands to suit my own purpose; that I gain untold wealth from secret understandings with the fur-traders and the *coureurs-de-bois*. As for the priests, I have much trouble from the Jesuits, who seem to have the Bishop and the Seminary priests completely dependent on their wishes. They, too, write lengthy accounts of my selling brandy to the Indians, when I believe that that is the way they themselves gain their chief support; of my laxity in helping them preserve the morals of the town from harm by countenancing too much the balls and dances the officers and their wives love to attend; and of permitting the performance of plays other than those submitted to them for approval. The Récollets, however, have, as always, been friendly to me.

"In spite of all, the colony prospers, the town grows, and the Indians are kept in check, while the people, except the few seeking to gain the influence of the Intendant by siding against me, are contented. All this could not be brought

about by such an incompetent villain as they make me out to be, *hein?*"

La Salle smiled at the twinkle in his patron's eye. Frontenac continued earnestly:

"I will say by our holy Sainte Anne of Beaupré that I intend that they all shall know that I stand to them in the place of the King, and that I am responsible to him alone, and not to every cur that snarls at my heels. *Dame!* but they shall learn their position and mine, and accord me all honor becoming me, the Governor."

A knock at the door interrupted him, and a servant entered to announce that the members of the Superior Council were awaiting the Governor's pleasure to begin the business of the meeting. Frontenac had called for the reading of the dispatches that had arrived on the "Saint Honoré" and the transaction of other important business. Tonti and La Salle accordingly withdrew and the Governor passed to the Council Chamber. The relation of his wrongs to his friends had tended to arouse the irritability that was so prominent a characteristic of the man. On entering the room a cloud gathered on his brow, as he saw all the members of the Council seated about a large table engaged in earnest conversation. No one stirred as he appeared, and it was only after his angry look that they seemed to recollect his posi-

tion and accordingly arose, some of them reluctantly enough, and bowed, remaining standing until he had taken his seat.

"How now, *Messieurs!*" he exclaimed, "do you proceed with the Council's business without waiting for its chief and President?" Then not pausing for a reply, he seated himself at the head of the table, having the Bishop on his right hand and the Intendant on his left, and directed them to proceed to business.

Duchesneau accordingly broke the seal bearing the royal impression, and handed it to the secretary to read. All listened eagerly to learn what messages the King sent to the chief officers of his colony. The first portion, dealing with matters pertaining to the State, was attended to with a respectful interest, but it was not until the latter part was reached, which touched upon the various disputes between Governor and Intendant in which each member of the Council had taken sides, that the interest became intense.

"M. le Comte de Frontenac," read the secretary, "we are surprised to learn all the new troubles and dissensions that have occurred in our country of New France, more especially since we have clearly and strongly given you to understand that your sole care should be to maintain harmony and peace among all our subjects dwelling therein. We have examined with care the contents of all the dispatches which you have written

us during the last year; and as the matters of which they treat are sufficiently ample, including dissensions almost universal among those whose duty it is to preserve harmony in the country under your command, we have weighed both sides and have this only to say to you: Consider well that, if it is any advantage or any satisfaction to you that we should be satisfied with your services, it is necessary that you change entirely the conduct which you have hitherto pursued."

During the reading Duchesneau's face gleamed with pleasure, while that portion of the Council that sided with him (Auteuil the attorney-general, Villiray and Tilly) exchanged glances of hearty satisfaction. Frontenac's wrath was greatly augmented at this public rebuke from the King, but he only commanded in a sharp tone that the secretary proceed with the reading.

"As for you, M. l'Intendant, we have examined all the letters, papers, and memorials that you sent us; and though it appear by the letters of M. de Frontenac that his conduct leaves something to be desired, there is assuredly far more to blame in yours than in his. As to what you say concerning his violence, his trade with the Indians, and in general all that you allege against him, we have written him a warning already. But since in the midst of your complaints you say many things which are without foundation, or which are no concern of yours, it is difficult to believe that you act in the spirit which we demand; that is to say, without interest

and without prejudice. If a change does not appear in your conduct before next year, we shall keep you no longer in office."

It was now the turn for Frontenac and his adherents, who constituted a majority of the Council, to rejoice. The Governor smiled scornfully as he saw the color mount on Duchesneau's face during the reading of this sharp reproof.

The next business taken up was the reading of the draft of a resolution passed at the previous meeting of the Council, which had been made out in terms agreeable to the Governor.

"See that it be writ well and fair upon the records," said Frontenac. Then turning to Duchesneau, he continued: "If M. l'Intendant's hand is steady enough, he can sign it now."

Duchesneau still smarting under the King's message, and disliking the tone of the Governor, which amounted to a command, replied:

"If the Council permit, I and the secretary will withdraw into the adjoining room where we can examine it in peace and enter it in proper form."

Frontenac blazed up at once. "And keep the Governor and the Council waiting? *Ma foi!* since when have we attended on your pleasure? *Dame!* sign it at once. I would have no se-

curity that the resolution would be accurately transcribed, did I not see it signed in my presence."

Stung to the quick, Duchesneau arose, and motioning to the secretary to follow him, seized the draft in his hand and made for the door. The Governor, thunder-struck at his resistance, planted himself firmly before it and exclaimed passionately:

"*Mordioux!* you shall not leave the Council Chamber until you have signed the paper. After that I care not when you leave, nor how long you remain away, either."

"Then I shall get out of the window, or else stay here all night," retorted the Intendant obstinately.

"Peace, M. le Gouverneur, and you, M. l'Intendant," said the Bishop, who, although antagonistic to Frontenac, saw that Duchesneau had gone too far, "accede to his reasonable request."

The Intendant looked about him sullenly, then approaching the table, signed the document, and turned to the Governor defiantly: "I withdraw my opposition;" next addressing the Council, "I crave leave, *Messieurs*, to read this communication that was handed me before entering."

So saying, he read a petition from one of the members of the Council, D'Amours by name, whose chair was vacant. It stated that Fron-

tenac had put him in prison, because, having obtained in due form a passport to send a canoe to his fishing-station at Matane, he had afterwards sent a sail-boat thither without applying for another passport. The Governor had sent for him and demanded by what right he did so. D'Amours replied that he believed he had acted in accordance with the intention of the King; whereupon "M. le Gouverneur fell into a rage and said to your petitioner, 'I will teach you the intentions of the King; and you shall stay in prison till you learn them;' and your petitioner was shut up in a chamber of the Château, wherein he still remains and prays the honorable Council that a trial be granted him according to law."

Duchesneau glanced vindictively at the Governor whilst reading the petition, well knowing that it would act as a bomb-shell among the members of the Council. He had no sooner finished than everything was in an uproar.

The partisans of Duchesneau were on their feet loudly clamoring for the release of their absent member, whilst others, friendly to the Governor, vainly strove to pacify them in order to gain a hearing for him. The confusion increased, ink was spilled, documents tossed from the table, fists were raised in air, and faces distorted with passion. Above the din the voices of Auteuil, Tilly, and Villiray were heard loudly

calling for justice, saying that their own personal liberty was in danger and that they would fight against such tyranny.

Frontenac had risen with such violence as to send the high-backed chair crashing over on the floor. He stood defiantly facing the angry Councillors. His anger choked him, his face and neck were purple with rage; the veins on his forehead stood out like great cords; his eyes streamed fire. At length he found utterance in speech as he heard the cries for justice and the words against tyranny. Striking with his huge fist upon the table, he bellowed "Silence!" and when he could be heard, continued:

"Ye dolts and rebels that cry forth for justice and threaten to raise arms against a tyrant, hear me! Know ye not that I am Governor, that in my person stands the King? If I have done aught amiss, I am answerable to him. You clamor against my enforcements of the law. What would you? That I overlook its infringement and thus give seeming ground for more lying letters and infamous reports? Were I to gloss over the transgressions of the law like you, M. l'Intendant, with your illicit brandy-trade, your connivance with *coureurs-de-bois* and fur-traders, the King would have anarchy throughout his colony instead of law and order. The case is plain. M. D'Amours admits the commission of

his fault, but claims the right of private interpretation of the King's commands. That right I deny. Were I to allow law-breaking in high places to go unpunished, in six months who would be found in all the colony who would not point to these as precedents, and excuse themselves? As for you who seek to fight a tyrant, know well with whom you have to deal." Then leaning over, he whispered low to his secretary, who hastily wrote at his dictation. When he had finished he quickly signed his name, and calling to a soldier standing guard outside the door, handed the paper to him, saying:

"Lieutenant Bizard, here is an order of banishment from Quebec for Messieurs Tilly, Auteuil, and Villiray; they are to retire to their country homes and remain there, awaiting my commands. See that this order is obeyed;" and stamping out of the room, he was gone.

# Chapter Twelve

## DEVOTED TO SECRET SERVICE, SHOWING THAT WALLS AND OTHER INANIMATE OBJECTS OFTEN HAVE EARS

THE scenes of anger and violence were over. The exiled Councillors had retired to their homes on parole that they would leave Quebec the next morning. The inhabitants of the Château were all asleep, and the entire citadel was again at peace.

A sentinel pacing his weary watch upon the rampart was the only living thing visible in the moonlight, while the barking of a solitary dog in the Lower Town and the distant howl of a hungry wolf from the direction of Beaupré were the only sounds apparently that broke the silence of a continent.

It was already after midnight, and the guard had been changed, when a keen eye might have seen a dark figure pass silently along within the shade of the barracks, the guard-room, and the Château itself, until it finally was merged in the deep shadow of the magazine at the extreme

end of the fort. Soon after another form appeared, gliding by the same route to a common rendezvous. Within the shelter of the building they stood and conversed in low tones, while awaiting the arrival of some one else. At length a third muffled figure joined them, and asked in an authoritative voice:

"Are we all here?"

"Yes, M. l'Intendant, and waiting," spoke up one of the group rather testily, as he shivered with the cold and drew his cloak closer about his shoulders.

"Pardon my delay, Monsieur l'Evêque," replied Duchesneau, "but I was merely taking the necessary precautions. I gave orders to have an extra amount of liquor served to the soldiers in the guard-room to-night, and delayed my coming until I had made sure that yonder sentinel received his double allowance before his turn came. He is too happy now to watch the shadows very closely; listen, you can hear him singing to himself."

"But are you sure we are entirely secure here?" spoke up the third member of the group, who looked uneasily about him.

"*Certainement!*" Duchesneau replied, with a slight touch of scorn in his tones, "unless the obscurity about us or yonder log have ears. But to the business we have come for." Then turn-

ing to the first speaker again, he went on. "Your letter to M. le Ministre, Monsieur l'Evêque, did not seem to have much weight, for the Sieur de la Salle has come in spite of your efforts."

"True, M. l'Intendant," was the reply, "but it seems that he managed to gain the ear of the King first. Listen while I give to you the words of his reply;" and he repeated from memory the secret letter of Colbert's.

There was a silence of a moment. Duchesneau, still smarting after the defeat in the Council Chamber, exclaimed with a muttered oath:

"Our plans go wrong at every point, despite our efforts." Then stamping his foot angrily, "*Mon Dieu!* the Governor's power increases daily. The success of the expedition of La Salle will redound to his glory and make him more arrogant and insufferable than ever."

"The Church, too, will lose the many tribes awaiting her coming, and they their souls through contamination with the shameless, lawless followers of this man," was the pious exclamation of him who had been addressed as "Monsieur l'Evêque."

"And our fur supply cut off and the trade destroyed," wailed the third.

"His efforts must be frustrated," resumed Duchesneau, who had suddenly conceived a plan, "but each of you must do his share."

"I shall send a trusty member of the Order

with La Salle who will warn the Indians against him," the holy man exclaimed.

"And I shall see that among his men there shall be a sufficient number devoted to our interest to cause his failure, perhaps instigate a mutiny at the proper moment; he may never come back," was the significant rejoinder of the third conspirator.

"But remember, no violence," cried the priest in alarm.

The priest, who was none other than Laval, Bishop of Quebec, feeling that the lateness of the hour, the secret meeting, and the lonely place were not befitting the dignity of his position, grew impatient and interposed.

"It grows late," he said, "and I have a vigil to keep before sunrise. I must be gone. Our plans are formed; let each supply the details of his part;" and muffling up his face, he disappeared around the corner of the magazine.

Duchesneau waited until he was sure of the Bishop's departure, then muttered after his retreating figure: "No violence, Monsieur l'Evêque, but if La Salle should have trouble with the savages and an arrow or bullet find its way into his carcass, we should not be to blame."

"But how will you secure M. Tonti?" asked his companion. "He is devoted to La Salle and cannot be bought."

"With gold, no. But what always succeeds when money fails?"

"You mean —"

"Yes, a woman."

"But who?"

"Leave that to me; that is my affair. See that you do your duty. *Bon soir!* Be ready to meet me again at any time."

So saying, the Intendant took his way homeward. A moment later the spot was deserted.

The moon sank slowly towards her goal; the witchery of her light enveloped all the earth, making of it a strange, weird world. And, as though in keeping with the uncanny hour and place, behold a miracle! for soon after the departure of the last member of the midnight council, the log lying within two paces of the spot where stood the three intriguers moved, stirred, arose, and, stretching arms and cramped legs, stole quietly away, muttering: "The night time is a cloak for sinners. *Mon Dieu!* many enemies, much honor."

Day was stealing in at the windows of the Château when Tonti was aroused by a slight touch on the forehead, and, opening his eyes, was for the moment startled at the strangeness of his surroundings. He soon perceived through the gray light the figure of Pompon standing beside

his bed, waiting silently until he should become thoroughly awakened.

"*Pardieu! mon cher* Pompon, and how did you get in?" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes and sitting up. Pompon pointed to an open window at the other side of the room. "He who sleeps catches no fish;" and drawing up a chair, seated himself beside the bed.

"For your part, you have evidently been fishing all night to judge by the dirt and disorder of your clothes. But what news do you bring? for there must be something important on your mind. One does not usually climb in at windows at dawn simply to say '*Bon jour!*'"

"You are right. I have important news and such that you must know quickly. If your brain is sufficiently cleared to listen and understand, I will relate rapidly what I have done and learned since we landed yesterday."

"Begin," said Tonti, as he settled back into a comfortable position.

"To show you I have not been idle, I will start at the moment when we stepped ashore. Just after whispering to you to leave me to my own devices, I slipped through the crowd while you were being welcomed by the Governor. I was anxious not to be recognized as belonging to the party of Sieur de la Salle, so I found my way to the tavern of Jacques Boisdon, on the

square near the church, a place recommended to me by one of the sailors as the centre of all the social, religious, and political intrigue in Quebec. I secured my lodging and soon made friends with Marie, daughter of the tavern-keeper, whom I found to be pretty and with a tongue that never ceases its chatter. She is evidently weary of her male admirers of the place, and found a stranger fresh from Paris a being to wonder at, admire, and one to whom she could tell all she knew of the city and its people."

A subdued chuckle came from Tonti, as he said:

"*Peste!* Pompon, how the air of the country changes one. You leave France a hater of all womankind, and an hour after you arrive here you are at the feet of the first fair charmer you meet."

"In all undertakings it is necessary to consider the end. I had a part to play. Tell a woman she is handsome and you will turn her head; tell her she is wondrous fair and she will soon turn fool and tell you all she knows. This one knew much and has told me everything. I have learned who and where our enemies are. The situation is like this: Two distinct parties exist, the one headed by the Governor, and consisting of Barrois, his secretary, and Bizard, lieutenant of his guard, Du Lhut, leader of the *coureurs-de-*

*bois*, the Récollet monks, and La Salle, together with a majority of the Council and most of the common people; the other, headed by the Intendant Duchesneau, consists of a few members of the Council, Le Moyne and his sons, Jacques Le Ber, and several other fur-merchants, the Bishop Laval, together with all the Order of the Jesuits. The quarrel between the two leaders is one due to their official positions: the Intendant is jealous of the powers granted to the Governor and writes continually complaints of his actions; the Governor in turn is jealous of the Intendant, regarding him as a spy upon his movements. Then, too, Frontenac is in secret sympathy with the outlawed *coureurs-de-bois*, and is lax in his efforts to apprehend and punish them. He has an eye to the profits they make in trade, and undoubtedly shares in them."

"*Cospetto!*" cried Tonti, "how much you have learned in so short a time."

"There is more to tell yet," continued Pompon. "Duchesneau in turn is interested in the profits of a certain group of traders here and at Montreal, of whom Jacques Le Ber is at the head; hence an additional reason for his hatred of the Governor and the desire to thwart his plans. The Jesuits look with disfavor on the exploration plans of Frontenac and La Salle, claiming that they would mean the ruin of the

Indian tribes they wish to convert, and whom they claim are supplied with brandy by the Governor's friends, the *coureurs-de-bois*. Frontenac has reason to believe that they have an eye to the fur-trade themselves, and that it is the beaver skins and not the heathen souls that they fear to lose. He claims, too, that he has proof of their selling brandy also. They are bitter likewise at the evident favor shown by the Governor to the Récollet friars."

"*Sangue di Dio!*" burst forth Tonti, "what a sea of hot water the Comte's patronage will throw us into. The clergy, the Intendant and his faction, and a lot of rascally traders. You have indeed done well to learn all this in time."

"Truly," responded Pompon, "a man warned is half saved. Our enemies will do all they can to hinder our success. Listen. After making love to the pretty Marie, about ten o'clock, as I was lying on one of the benches at the tavern thinking over all that had been told me, a man entered the room, which was empty save for myself, and after looking about carefully and seeing only me, asleep and snoring, with an empty glass near me on the table, he sat down as though awaiting some one. All are not asleep who have their eyes shut, however, so although I continued with my drunken snores, my ears were open. Soon another man entered and they commenced

a conversation of seeming serious import. I caught the words 'magazine,' 'midnight,' 'Monsieur l'Evêque,' before they left. I was awake in an instant. I felt it my duty to be present at any midnight meeting the Bishop might have, for fear his morals might become corrupted. Poor man, the saintly fanatic is merely the Jesuits' tool. I bear him no malice, for he intends no wrong. Making my way to the spot an hour before the time appointed, I rolled myself in a cloak, and, lying on the ground, I threw a lot of dried leaves and earth over me, hoping to escape detection. I was almost discovered, however. At midnight three men came, whom I learned from their conversation were the Intendant — "

"*Ventre-saint-gris!*" exclaimed Tonti in astonishment.

"Laval, Bishop of Quebec."

"And —"

"And Jacques le Ber, the fur-trader from Montreal."

"*Corne du diable!* Our worst enemies! What did they say?"

"They vow vengeance on Frontenac and intend to strike at him through La Salle."

Pompon then related the details of the plans he had overheard. Tonti laughed heartily. "*Peste!*" said he, "but the game is a pretty one. So a woman is to win my favor and make a traitor

of me? *Parbleu!* there *is* one woman," he murmured, "but — *per Dio!* not even for my Rose would I be false to a trust."

"I spent the rest of the night," continued Pompon, "walking up and down along the edge of the river seeking a plan by which to foil their purpose; I have not formed one yet, so we must simply watch for the next move of the enemy. I must return, as it is now full day and some early riser might not understand my leaving by a window. Tell La Salle as much of the matter as you think best. For my part, I believe he had best remain ignorant; we can help him better so." And with this word Pompon put his leg over the window-sill and dropped lightly to the ground.

# Chapter Thirteen

## DEVOTED TO CUPID AND HIS ARCHERY PRACTICE

BRIGHT and crisp dawned the autumn day. Sounds of unusual excitement in the Lower Town greeted the ears of the two comrades as they started out from the Château in search of Frontenac. They met him in front of the Cathedral, in company with a young woman dressed as near the Paris fashion of the previous year as the exigencies of the climate and place permitted. The Governor hailed them with a hearty "*Bon jour, Messieurs!* How has your first night in the wilderness passed?" Then turning to his companion, he presented her as the wife of the always faithful Lieutenant Bizard of his guard. "I will leave you, M. le Capitaine Tonti, to the tender mercies of my fair lieutenantess, who will show you the bewildering novelty of the marriage market this morning. Take good care of him, Madame, and do not let the bright eyes of one of his ship-companions capture him and deprive us of his estimable assistance. If you will accompany me back

to the Château, Sieur de la Salle, I have somewhat to discuss with you;" and with a lift of the hat and a wave of his hand, he left Tonti and his new acquaintance together.

As the young man turned with a smile to speak to his companion he beheld a graceful figure whose every adornment bespoke a care and taste that could have been learnt only in Paris; a pretty face, small and well rounded, whose cheeks glowed with the brisk air of the morning; a pair of gray-blue eyes that drooped coquettishly beneath their long lashes as his glance met hers.

Lieutenant Bizard had been of that celebrated regiment of Carignan-Salières that was ordered home in 1668 by the King, but a portion of which had been sent back to New France two years later. He had had time, however, during this stay in France to woo the comely daughter of a Parisian shopkeeper who, woman-like, captivated by the lace and buttons of the soldier, her feminine pride tickled by the evident envy of her associates as she walked about with him, had determined to cast in her lot across the sea with her stalwart lover, dreaming of conquests and advancements for him until she beheld in his bluff face the features of a future colonial Turenne. A year of the social life at Quebec amidst her primitive surroundings had dissolved these dreams

and left her a disappointed, unhappy woman, an arrant flirt, whose food and air were admiration and attention, loving excitement and a touch of danger in everything. She had thus easily become a ready aid to Duchesneau in his intrigues. At an early interview that morning she had received her instructions from him and had set out upon her task with a light heart, as the playing of a game with a young, handsome cavalier, fresh from Paris and the court, was far from repugnant to her.

"If M. le Capitaine Tonti will permit," she said demurely, "I believe I can find him entertainment for the morning that will show that we are not all savages here."

"*Par Dieu!* Madame," exclaimed Tonti gallantly, "I can well believe that. The sight of your person has already proved to me that beauty, wit, and youth are to be found the whole world over."

"Fie! M. Deceiver," was the blushing response, "seek not to try the flatteries of Versailles on us poor artless exiled creatures. Have mercy on our helplessness, lest we succumb." Then with a tender, half-audible sigh she turned away. "Come," said she, "to the Place d'Armes and I will show you how marriages are arranged in a new country."

Together they approached the square, his fair

guide pointing out the various buildings to Tonti, together with the distant spires of the Jesuit Church and the Hôtel Dieu. A din as of many voices greeted their ears as they entered the enclosure. They found the Place filled with a crowd of interested and curious spectators. Soldiers off duty, citizens, with their sleeves rolled up, stopping in their work to witness the annual sight; good dames with their knitting in their hands, and their children, toddling along beside them, holding fast to the folds of their skirts; here and there an officer's wife with her escort — all mingling in a good-natured confusion.

"It is early yet," explained Madame Bizard to Tonti, as they wended their way slowly through the crowd. "The market does not begin for a half-hour yet. Meanwhile let us work our way toward the opposite side of the square where the crowd is thickest; there we will find the anxious swains sighing for the appearance of their future wives."

They finally reached a position where they could see and hear all that went on. Before them were congregated some hundred or more men, most of them of the peasant class from the neighboring farms and seigniories, clad in their holiday garb, while the clothes, made of skins and caps of fur, betrayed a few of the hardy pioneers who ventured to the further limits of the settlement

to rear their cabins and set their traps. They exchanged greetings with one another, laughing and joking noisily, while pipesful of tobacco and drams of brandy changed ownership in friendly barter or social comity. Through it all, however, each kept an anxious eye out towards the side of the square from which the procession of "King's girls" would approach.

"They all seem eager for the fearful fate before them," laughed Tonti.

"True," was the reply, that had a touch of bitterness in it, "but if you pity the men, I pity the unfortunate girls more, doomed as they are to a life of servitude and labor with a man they have never seen before, and whom they will probably wish within a month that they had never met. Still, as you know, they are all *bourgeoisie* who are accustomed to nothing better than hard service and abuse. It is their King's command that they shall marry, and they obey. We soldier-folk, however, although the King makes us marry too, have a Parisian saying that we bear in mind."

"What is that?" was Tonti's query.

"Keep your eyes wide open before marriage and half shut after," was the saucy rejoinder.

Just then the sound of a bell was heard, and the increased confusion of the crowd interrupted Tonti's reply. From the Convent of the Ursu-

lines, where they had passed the night, issued the procession of thirty girls with Madame Bourdon at their head, who had come over in the "Saint Honoré" with La Salle and Tonti. Two by two they marched with clasped hands. The suitors ceased suddenly their clamor, and quickly formed a lane, down which the maidens passed, watching with furtive glances the faces of their future husbands. These in turn strove to make their choice at a glance, and some, leaning toward the moving damsels, whispered: "Wait for me, Jean Bedu. I have three rooms in my house, and twenty arpents of land all cleared." Or, "Take none but me; I am your Pierre, and live but one and a half leagues from Quebec. You will be safe from the Indians with me." Or again, "Delay your choice, *ma petite*, for me, the tallest, strongest of them all. I can drink a pint of raw brandy and never show it, or throw a half-grown buck with ease, and can get more furs in a month than the rest in a season. You will make no mistake, I am a *bon garçon*."

Tonti and his companion were in an excellent position to enjoy the scene. "Here they come, the future mothers of New France," were the mocking words he heard. "Take care lest M. le Comte does not lose you in the sea of matrimony."

"No fear," replied Tonti. "You see I have

no chance; there are but thirty wives to be, while there are four times as many wooers. Besides, we are farther off than they; all the best maids would be taken before I could reach them."

"True," murmured Madame Bizard, "you would deserve only the best." Then in a lower tone she added, as she gently touched his hand hanging at his side, "We can probably find one to your taste and more to your deserts in Quebec itself."

The contact of the warm hand that lingered against his own thrilled the young man, and he was about to turn to his companion when his other sleeve was plucked, and a voice muttered in his ear, "Beware!" and looking over his shoulder he beheld the form of Pompon, who looked at him earnestly, and then, with a significant glance at the young woman beside him, disappeared in the crowd.

Tonti recalled with a start all that Pompon had told him at daybreak, and realized that the enemy was at work and that he had his part to play in the game too, so with an admiring glance he whispered: "I fear all such are taken."

A square space was marked out upon the surface of the Place by a succession of hewn logs, laid end to end. Within this inclosure only the prospective wives and eager swains were admitted. Then ensued a scene of merriment and interest

for the on-lookers. One ill-favored suitor, selecting from choice the least attractive of the young women, partly because he knew he would have little chance among the fairer ones, partly because he felt there would be less trouble with her from other men after marriage, hurried off toward the church of the Récollets, within which a number of priests were awaiting the happy couples, while a notary sat at the door ready to do a thriving business. One particularly desirable lass, whose comely features were accompanied by a physique indicating great endurance and strength of muscle, was instantly besieged by so great a multitude of admirers that she fled to Madame Bourdon, who restored order amongst them and made the wooers advance one at a time and each give his name, residence, and amount of worldly possessions.

"There they are," remarked Madame Bizard in a half-contemptuous tone, "a fine collection of healthy cattle. Walk up, *Messieurs!* Varieties for all tastes! the tall, the short, the dark, the light, the fat, the thin. Poke them in the ribs, examine their teeth, and then when you have made your selection, take your property home with you." Then after a moment's silence, "There can be no question of a difference in their *dots*, as His Gracious Majesty has endowed each alike."

"*Mon Dieu!* they bring wealth to their husbands?" queried Tonti.

"*Certainement!* Fifty livres in household supplies and two barrels of salted meat," was the laughing rejoinder.

"*Ma foi!* a liberal dowry."

"But you forget the princely gift he gives the new husbands for surrendering their liberty: an ox, a pair of swine, a pair of fowls, some salt meat, and — eleven crowns in money;" and again the merry laugh rang in Tonti's ear with a sweetness that, had he not been on his guard, he would have believed to be sincerely genuine.

Soon all the girls were mated and had disappeared through the church doors. The remaining wooers took their discomfiture philosophically, and, departing in twos and threes, repaired to the nearest tavern, where they sought to drown their disappointment and drink to better luck next year.

# Chapter Fourteen

## IN WHICH A TRAP IS SPRUNG, BUT THE MOUSE ESCAPES

THE days passed rapidly. La Salle and Tonti were busily engaged with preparations for their departure. Among the thirty men the explorer had brought with him he chose one, La Motte by name, as his chief lieutenant under Tonti. The stores of iron and cordage for the vessel he intended building on the Great Lakes, the beads, scarlet cloth, hatchets, knives, and other presents for the Indians, the powder and bullets for the use of the entire party, — all were carefully packed into the smallest compass possible, ready to be loaded into the canoes.

Pompon, still incognito, was here and there and everywhere, saying little and hearing much. Through his activity it was learned that the Jesuit priest who offered to accompany the expedition was instigated to do so by Laval. His offer was refused, and the services of the Récollet friar, Father Louis Hennepin, who had come all the way from Fort Frontenac to meet

La Salle, was chosen. The latter had brought a letter from his Provincial, Father Le Fèvre, containing permission to join the expedition. To prepare himself, the worthy friar went into retreat at the Récollet convent, remaining for several days in prayer and meditation. Finally, after dining at the Château with Frontenac, La Salle, and Tonti, and after a farewell vigil, he received the blessing of Laval and departed at daybreak. His friends watched his figure with its sandalled feet, coarse gray capote, and peaked hood, the cord of St. Francis hanging at his side, glide away in his birch canoe, paddled by two men, en route for Fort Frontenac, where they were to await the arrival of the others. Within a week La Motte and most of the men followed, with twelve well-laden canoes.

The bulk of the work of preparation being thus over, Tonti had ample time to renew his acquaintance with Madame Bizard. She had made one effort toward influencing him against La Salle, but had been so coldly repulsed that she began to doubt her ability to bias him directly against his friend and leader. The difficulty of the task, however, only added zest to her endeavors, so that she redoubled her attempts. They met daily, seemingly by chance, often taking long walks together up the hill beyond the windmill, or to the other extremity of the town

under pretext of viewing the Cathedral, the Seminary, Hôtel Dieu, or the Palace of the Intendant. On these strolls she plied her coquettish arts in vain. Tonti parried each thrust with as much skill as though it had been a combat with swords instead of a duel of intrigue.

Madame Bizard had long ago tired of the humdrum life of the town and the practical straightforwardness of her matter-of-fact husband, who, taken up with the monotonous duties of his calling, had but little time or taste for the frivolities of the social world, such as it was. He had every confidence, however, in his mate, giving her full liberty, believing that in time she would settle down to the serious obligations appertaining to the wife of a soldier at a frontier post.

The easy grace of the high-spirited gallant who had so suddenly appeared in her life, flattering her vanity, with his mingled audacious banter and deferring humility, casting over all the glamour of the *grand monde*, finally won her silly little heart. It was with genuine alarm and dread, therefore, that she viewed the growing preparations that were to end in their separation, and she increased her efforts at fascination now that she had what she believed to be her own passion for the man to urge her on as well as the commands of the Intendant. She met with ill

success despite her endeavors, and daily and hourly chafed at the thought of his obduracy or cried her pretty eyes red o' nights with vexation at her failure and the thought of losing him.

Frontenac was in high feather as the result of La Salle's success in gaining over some of the fur-traders into forming an association and advancing money. He entertained them all right royally for several nights, and then resolved to give a ball in honor of his friends the evening before their departure, partly to maintain his dignity as Governor and give his mimic court a taste of the gayety of Versailles, and partly to show his defiance of his enemies, the Jesuits and the Bishop. The latter had recently inveighed against all balls and dances as tending to promote "the luxury of dress, which," he said, "appears in the rich and dazzling fabrics wherein the women and girls of Canada attire themselves; in the excess of ornaments which they put on; in the extraordinary head-dresses which they affect, their heads being uncovered and full of strange trinkets; and in the immodest curls so expressly forbidden in the Epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter."

Enemies and friends alike were invited, for few of the former would dare to absent themselves, although the magnificence of the occasion would afford a means of Frontenac's triumph-

ing over them, winning still further the favor of the people who dearly loved to behold any manifestations of royalty and grandeur.

The space in front of the Château was brilliantly lighted by a large bonfire, kept burning by a group of servants, who heaped on large quantities of brushwood. At the entrance two huge torches of pine knots flamed above the heads of a dozen soldiers drawn up in a line before the door. Within, all was light and merriment. The furniture had been removed from the entire lower floor, and a gay company thronged the rooms. The walls had been decorated with huge bunches of autumn leaves and berries backed by evergreen boughs, while here and there a flag was draped about a picture of the King, Mazarin, Colbert, and Champlain.

Two of the rooms with floors freshly waxed were given up to dancing. All of the State officials were present in full regalia, while the members of the newly formed *noblesse* were there, eager to claim the honors due their unaccustomed social position. Many of the prominent merchants, especially those engaged in the present undertaking of La Salle, were honored. Nor were the rest of the citizens neglected, for in the Lower Town the Governor had hired the largest tavern, and, providing musicians for dancing, had thrown it open to the public, with plenty

of good Norman cider to quench their rugged thirst.

Frontenac walked among his guests with a smiling countenance and fine presence. His humor was jovial, and he showed no signs of irritation. He heard with inward satisfaction the exclamations of pleasure from the women, and saw with secret delight the glances of disgust and ill-concealed chagrin on the part of Duchesneau and his coterie.

La Salle for the last time was the same court dandy as when Tonti saw him first. Tonti himself bowed and smiled to every one, and was a universal favorite. He danced several times with Madame Bizard, and noticed that she seemed preoccupied and sad. After losing sight of her for an hour he found her again. This time she seemed to be laboring under some secret excitement. She complained of weariness, and suggested that instead of dancing they walk up and down the balcony that ran past one side of the room. Tonti assented, and, after throwing a wrap about his companion's shoulders, passed with her through one of the open windows. The first turn was made in silence. Then as they stopped a moment and looked out over the Lower Town at their feet, the woman spoke low and indistinctly:

"And so you are going to leave to-morrow. Are you glad?"

"*Ma foi!* yes," was the frank answer. "To-morrow begins the work I have set out to do. I hasten toward it."

"And is there nothing in a man's life beside his work?" came in pettish tones from the depths of the hood beside him.

"Ah, yes, *Cielo!*" he replied, with a spark of mischief in his eye. "There is honor, and one other — love."

The feminine figure gave a little start at this, and, drawing nearer, waited for him to continue.

"Yes, a man's love comes next to his honor. I shall therefore have feelings of regret as well at leaving civilization and friends behind, and shall begrudge each westward step that takes me further from the desire of my heart, the idol of my dreams;" and unnoticed by his friend, he looked in the direction of the ocean and blew a kiss toward France, that the wind caught up and carried off far into the night.

"You know, then, what it is to love?" came to his ear in soft, caressing tones.

"To love, ah! that it is to live," pursued Tonti, as he dreamily watched a spark rise from a chimney, mount high upon the wings of the breeze, and then die slowly out. "Yes, it is the wine of life, that gives one strength and purpose; the bread of the heart's existence. What other food is there that does not moulder and decay?

The very air, the only air upon which the soul can subsist, for are not all else but noxious vapors and unwholesome fumes?"

The woman's blood surged to her temples and blinded her eyes in a reddening flash; she reeled unsteadily a moment; her breath came in unconscious, noiseless gasps. The end she had labored for in vain seemed suddenly to burst in sight; she had but to reach forth and grasp it. One desperate effort and it would be hers.

"Ah! Henri, my love," she murmured, as she nestled closer with her head upon his breast, "why did you not tell me sooner! I could have arranged it all. But it is not too late." Then turning up her face, she spoke rapidly and with impetuous earnestness. "Come, give up your plans for the morrow; leave the danger and exposure and the glory if you will for others; let them be lost in the wilderness, but do you remain, for I love you, love you, love you! Flee with me to-night. I have a canoe and well-paid servant awaiting us. An hour's time will see us half-way to Beauport. Near by is a seigniory held by a friend of the Intendant's. I have done much for Duchesneau, he will do much for me. I have a letter from him here" — she tapped her bosom — "that will gain for us the protection needed. We can stay at this seigniory until La Salle has started and the storm is over.

The Intendant will give us a large grant of land —— he will help us —— I have saved some little money. Come, *mon cher*, with me; there is still time;" and at the end of this passionate outburst she seized Tonti by one hand and with the other caressed his cheek.

The young man heard the woman's voice, but comprehended not at first the meaning of her speech. His first words, uttered as they were in a moment of mischievous gallantry, had brought to his mind the truth that he was about to take the plunge that would separate him from all that would recall Renée and her surroundings to him. Here at Quebec the familiar accents of her mother tongue, the sight of her countrymen, and all that pertained to civilization, had served to lessen to his mind the actual sense of great geographical dissociation. But from the morrow on, savage sights and sounds and the unaccustomed environment of primeval nature would emphasize to him his loneliness and separation. His glance fell upon a star burning brighter than its fellows, and he recognized in it an old friend, one that had kept him company through many a solitary vigil, one that had presaged victory for him before more than one battlefield, one that he realized was looking down even then from French skies and was guarding his heart's treasure, wherever in that broad land she might be.

The words that fell upon his ear met with a slumbering comprehension, but the touch aroused him. The contact of the fevered hand seemed to burn him, seemed a profanation of the thoughts of the revery he had fallen into.

He was awakened in an instant; the full meaning of the woman's accents flashed over him. He realized that in the playing of his part he had gone too far. He started back a step.

"*Mon Dieu!* flee with you?" he exclaimed in astonishment.

"*Certainement;* now, at once. Ah! *mon Henri,* do not keep me waiting —"

"But your husband —" he ejaculated.

"Bah! that fool, dunce, booby!" she cried in contempt, as she stamped her foot angrily. "He can console himself out of the next shipload of girls. That is the sort of wife that would suit him best, the blockhead. Why should we care for him? We love —"

Tonti seized her roughly by the shoulder and gazed into her face, illuminated by a ray of light from the window. The woman's lack of principle appealed less to his anger than did the realization of the fateful consequences to himself had the vile plot succeeded, the full details of which from the day he arrived to the present moment flashed clear and distinct through his mind.

"Woman," he cried in a hoarse, strident tone,

as he sought vainly to control himself, "did I not say that there was one thing strongest of all in a man's life — honor? Stronger than love itself, love, true love I mean, not the polluted thing you so falsely offer me? Did you think I would be false to my comrade or my love? (*Dieu me pardonne* for speaking her name in the presence of such as you.) Did you suppose I was blind to your miserable conspiracy to trap me, you and your master Duchesneau? *Per Dio!* were you but a man I would know how to revenge this insult to my honor and to my intelligence."

The woman stared at him for a moment, petrified by astonishment, trembling with mortification, rage, and despair in quick succession. A shadow fell across her face; it was that of Tonti disappearing through the window. She was alone.

# Chapter Fifteen

## WHEREIN FRONTENAC ASSUMES THE RÔLE OF GUARDIAN, AND TWO FAMILIAR FACES REAPPEAR

TWO years passed, and affairs of moment, affecting closely the lives and fortune of all the chief actors in this New World drama, were enacted in Quebec. For a time the new association of fur-traders, whose support La Salle had with difficulty obtained, were content with their venture and looked forward to the day when they could reasonably expect to hear tidings of the expedition's success. Their confidence resisted for a time the insidious attacks made by Duchesneau, through the crafty Jacques Le Ber and other agents against the enterprise. But little by little, as no news came and the efforts of the indefatigable Intendant were unremitting, their assurance was weakened. La Salle's personality, had he been there, would have been sufficient to hold their allegiance, and Frontenac himself could doubtless have allayed their uneasiness. Affairs of state, however, had compelled him to devote all his time to their disentangle-

ment. His relations with Duchesneau became more and more strained; the Council showed itself more unruly; failure in their crops had made the neighboring farmers dissatisfied; their demands for government assistance became more clamorous, while the expected aid from the King had been delayed and was destined to prove to be little better than an empty promise.

Thus the first vague fears for the success of the expedition had become, thanks to the Intendant's machinations, a settled feeling of dissatisfaction and unrest; and when a messenger finally arrived with a tale of La Salle's misfortunes and difficulties, the anger of the discontents became open. Hence the seizure of all of the available property of La Salle at this juncture. Frontenac did his utmost to placate these men, and it was only the expected arrival in September (of the year following that in which Tonti and his comrades had set out from Quebec) of the King's ship that kept them from taking further active measures for securing legal redress for their losses. The possibility of an alteration in the plans of the King for his Colonies; of material aid from the royal treasury; of a change in officials — all caused a suspension of hostilities on the part of the warring parties and individuals.

Once more did the cliffs and shores re-echo to the roar of cannon, as the long expected messenger

from beyond the horizon's rim folded its sails and anchored peacefully in the basin before the town. Again were letters read from King and Minister exhorting loyal subjects to maintain amicable relations amongst themselves, and to exercise all due economy in the administration of affairs; again did the suitors swarm to the marriage market and carry away the new consignment of "King's girls." In many ways the ship's arrival had proved a disappointment. The amount of money sent had been wofully short of the sum asked for; of the two hundred soldiers he had implored the King to dispatch for the proper garrisoning of the various posts, and the overawing of the savages who had given increasing signs of unfriendliness to the French, Frontenac had received but sixty.

It was while reviewing mentally the general situation that the Governor sat at his desk, the morning after the ship's arrival, in the great room at the Château, where he first dined with La Salle and Tonti. A stormy session of the Council the evening before and the knowledge of the impending difficulties ahead had not deterred him from a good night's sleep. Nothing seemed to daunt the nerve of steel and heart of oak that the man possessed. Danger and difficulties only made him strive the harder. The heat of battle had been his lot all his life, whether in Louis' Dutch and Italian wars, or in a campaign against the

Turk. It was, then, with a feeling of renewed energy and eagerness for the fray that he surveyed the situation. "I will govern in spite of them," he exclaimed as he struck the desk, bestrewn with papers before him, a vigorous blow with his fist. "Them" comprehended all who rendered his task difficult, from the procrastinating King and his Minister across the seas, to the painted savage lurking in the forests of the New World.

Thus with a fresh vigor and determination to face his most belligerent enemy boldly, he ordered a servant to admit any seeking audience with him. Imagine his surprise when he beheld before him, not the crafty malicious countenance of the Intendant bringing to his attention some fresh point of dispute, or the cringing form and whining voice of Jacques Le Ber as he offered a new complaint from the trading community, but rather the face, pale and severe, of Madame Bourdon, who had again been placed in charge of the feminine portion of the ship's cargo. She was accompanied by a veiled, girlish figure, clad in the plainest garb, who retired to one side of the room upon entering, leaving her conductress to approach the Governor alone.

Frontenac, on seeing Madame Bourdon, immediately arose and welcomed her kindly, receiving from her hand a letter, which he opened forthwith and proceeded to read, after glancing

at the signature. A look of surprise and pleasure passed over his features as he recognized the handwriting and name of his wife.

Anne de la Grange-Trianon, Comtesse de Frontenac, had in her sixteenth year become enamored of the dashing famous young soldier who had succeeded in reaching the rank of *Maréchal de Camp* by the time he was twenty-six. Though the match was opposed by her father because of her suitor's lack of large means, she was wedded to him one fine day at the little church of Saint Pierre aux Bœufs, which had the privilege of uniting couples without the consent of their parents. A year of happiness followed, then love fled, at least, on her part. She found him wayward and headstrong; he found her possessed of an imperious temper, and a restless craving for excitement. They separated, maintaining for each other a profound respect, although on his part it was really a tenderer feeling. She was always proud of his success, but when he left for the New World she preferred to remain behind. Her influence at court was sufficient to be of inestimable service to her absent husband on more than one occasion. For a time the friend of Mademoiselle, she finally retired to the Arsenal, the former residence of Sully, with Mlle. d'Outrelaise, a distant cousin of Renée (the two branches of the family were

on unfriendly terms), whom she made her life-long companion. There, styled by their admirers "*Les Divines*," they set up a court for themselves by the aid of their beauty and abundant wit which attracted many, and gave the tone to the best company in Paris.

The letter read as follows:

"To Louis de Buade, Comte de Palluau et Frontenac: I commend to your protection and care the young girl who bears this to you. She is Renée d'Outrelaise, a relative of my beloved friend, and protégée of Mademoiselle, who has kept her in seclusion with her for two years. News of her beauty being noised abroad, One Whom You Know resolved to see her and having done so became infatuated. Fearing for her charge the same fate that befell Mlle. de la Vallière and others, Mademoiselle has found means of sending her out of the country as the only sure way of her escaping Him. Hoping to render her position safer as well as humor the child's desire to turn temporarily a religieuse she has asked me to intercede with you in her behalf, believing that in a couple of years she will have become effaced from a Certain Memory and can then return in safety. I rely upon your discretion and power to care for her. She has chosen the name of Sœur Amélie. Do not let her real name be known. All is well for you here. His Majesty, despite your enemies, has confidence in you. My respects to you and all good wishes for your success and prosperity.

"Anne de Frontenac."

No words of love were there, yet the Governor's eyes lingered with pleasure on the signature. She still was proud to use his name. He glanced at Madame Bourdon as if for further explanation.

"Mademoiselle was committed to my keeping before sailing, with strict orders that she should be placed in your care. She refused to leave her cabin except at night throughout the voyage. She is somewhat paler than when she left France, but otherwise she is well. I have discharged my duty and will leave her future disposition to your Excellency." And with a bow Madame Bourdon retired.

Frontenac walked slowly over to the window near which the stranger stood, and approaching her said kindly: "Come, *ma chère*, it seems that my wife has asked me to aid you, which I shall gladly do. Will you not sit down that we may talk matters over?" And taking her hand, he led her with gentle courtesy to a chair, and drawing his own near, sat down. The young girl thanked him in a low voice, and throwing back her veil revealed her features for the first time to her companion. "*Mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed, as the freshness of her rich beauty became apparent. "I can well understand the alarm of Mademoiselle."

An hour they talked. He strove to learn as

much of her history as she cared to reveal to him, and endeavored by the fatherly tone and interest he displayed to reassure her of his kindly thought and wish. He realized her helpless state and saw that she was unhappy, and as he talked he revolved in his own mind several plans for her future care. Then, as the subject perplexed him somewhat, he arose and paced thoughtfully up and down. He could not think seriously of allowing her to be lost in a religious life. It was necessary, therefore, to find some family in which to place her that would be congenial and tend to dissipate her melancholy. Glancing out of a window in his perplexity, he saw the figure of a woman passing the square in front of the Château. "The very person," he exclaimed, and calling to his servant, he bade him run and inform Madame Bizard that he wished to speak with her. An arrangement was soon made.

Madame Bizard was rejoiced at being thrown into such intimacy with the daughter of a gentleman. No explanation was given of Renée's presence in Quebec; that she was a ward of the Governor was sufficient. The girl herself was glad to reach the refuge of a new feminine friend. Lieutenant Bizard was quartered in a house near the Château, convenient for Renée to make frequent calls upon her guardian, who soon became

very much attached to her. She was to him the closest link to that world of fashion and gayety from which his official position exiled him. It seemed a comfort to her also to talk with him of Mademoiselle, her family, and her child-life in Poitou. Even his conversation, which touched mainly on persons whose names she had merely heard, was pleasant to her ears. Shrinking from the admiring glances of those she met, she went out but little, save for a stroll with Madame Bizard at dusk, or a brisk morning walk alone before the sleepy city was awake. Thrown thus upon her own resources in a great measure, she passed most of her time in-doors, playing on her lute, embroidering an altar cloth, or reading and re-reading the scanty store of books Frontenac lent her.

Madame Bizard often sat and talked, retailing to her all the gossip and events of the town. She dared not speak ill of the Comte, but her predilection for Duchesneau and his partisans led her to vent her feelings in acrimonious aspersions on all who were allied with the Governor. Best of all, Renée liked to question her friend about the strange vast land she had come to; its history and its people; the tales of adventures in its wilds; the rugged life of its pioneers; the martyrdoms of its missionaries. And as she listened, her heart glowed within her and she wished that she too were a man and might set forth to hew a

way through the great unknown that civilization might follow; or yet again the hazy, half-formed plan suggested itself to her mind that even a woman's weak hands through her gentle ministration in hours of sickness and plague might win a path to heathen hearts for the glorious truths of her religion.

Madame Bizard had several times touched upon La Salle's exploring expeditions but had spoken of no member of it other than its leader. Him she denounced as a thief, a liar, and a swindler. Renée listened eagerly, not daring to question her companion closely, fearing lest the sound of the beating of her heart would be overheard; and bent her face low over her work or turned away her head that the glow on her cheek might not disclose the fact that her interest in the subject was other than that of a stranger. Finally, one day she essayed to make some inquiry as to the personnel of the party. Madame Bizard, whose fund of local gossip was low at the moment, quickly branched off into a full description of the chief members of the enterprise.

"There was one young man, *ma chère*," she said, "who deserves to be eaten by the savages. His name is Henri de Tonti, and he occupies a position next to that of the leader. Had he remained in Quebec I should have considered it my duty to warn you of him, for a more danger-

ous person for a young girl to meet I cannot imagine. He behaved scandalously here, coquetting with all the women of the place. It is a pity; they say he has a wife and child he abandoned in Paris. We women are so weak that it would be small wonder if some of us were to believe the honeyed words spoken by one who, I will admit, is so handsome, gallant, and possessed of so winning a manner."

Renée, pale and agitated, made her needle fly the faster as her companion rattled on. She dreaded what the woman would say next, yet longed for her to proceed.

"He will never come back here, I know," continued Madame Bizard, "for he ought to know that my husband would shoot him down the instant he arrived. Yes," she went on, as she saw Renée give a start, "he even tried his wiles on me, the miscreant! Of course, one cannot blame a man for desiring to be friendly, and for seeking the acquaintance of a woman of my position, who, although I repeat it myself, is said to be at least passably good-looking. He should, however, have paid attention to the ordinary proprieties of civilized people, and should not have so outraged my feelings of wifely honor and womanly pride by actually making love to me, and the night before his departure urging me to flee with him to the wilderness."

An exclamation from Renée interrupted her, and she saw that the girl had pricked her finger with her needle and stained the fabric she was working with a drop of blood.

"There *is* a man," the woman continued, much to Renée's relief, "who has all of his virtues and none of his faults, who came on the same ship with you; I wonder you did not see him. He is called '*le Comte*,' and is staying with the Intendant. I have met him several times when at the Palace and have seen him in the distance while walking. I want you to meet him. M. le Gouverneur will not object to your receiving a friend of the Intendant. I have in fact invited him to call, and, *mon Dieu!*" she cried with a blush of pleasure as she glanced out of the window, "here he is coming to the house this moment." Renée looked in the direction pointed out to her and saw the figure of a young man approaching. He lifted up his face toward the window; the sunlight smote it. Renée uttering a cry of terror fell back in a swoon. She had recognized the Comte de Miron.

# Chapter Sixteen

RELATES THE EVENTS THROUGH WHICH A BIRD IN THE HAND BECAME TWO IN THE BUSH

WEEK after week followed with dreams of home, of green fields and trees and brooks, interspersed with glimpses of sad, patient, sympathetic faces of nuns and the rustling of their holy garments, which seemed like the sound of angels' wings, and Renée awakened to a realization that the former were but dreams and the restful assurance that the latter were always near to comfort and protect her. Some spoke of ship fever contracted on the voyage during which two members of the crew had died, notwithstanding the fact that she had been ashore a full month before falling ill. Others shook their heads and whispered something about a strange disease, lately found among the Indians, that seized upon the mind as well as the body. All agreed that it would need every effort to strengthen the weakened frame and renew the brain that seemed to rally most tardily. In reality it was the double blow of the news of her lover's

unfaithfulness, and the sight of the man she feared and whom she believed to be dead, coming as it did after the fatigue of her long voyage and close confinement of her stuffy cabin, that proved too great a shock to the nervous system of the young girl.

The Governor came daily, and strove with real distress to encourage the sufferer. Madame Bizard appeared frequently too, telling her of the outside world and urging her to a quick convalescence. But somehow the desire to recover was lacking in the patient. It was as though a spring had snapped within her leaving inertia instead of energy, and a desire to slumber on in sweet forgetfulness rather than the determination to resume the weary load of life again. But her release was not to be, and as she slowly began to regain ground she found relief and her chiefest pleasure in the companionship of the nuns who nursed her. Their life in its seclusion and usefulness appealed to her heart, and gradually the fancy for a religious life became strengthened to a determination. Her own existence would always be a blank, and could she do better than to fill out her remaining years in the service of God? He had evidently had a purpose in permitting her to live, almost against her will.

When she first told Frontenac of her decision he stormed and swore he would ship her back to

France; then, as he saw that she remained unshaken in her resolution, he finally suggested a compromise to which she agreed. This was that she was to remain with the nuns for two years as a *donnée* or religious helper who has taken no vows. If, after this novitiate she still persisted in her purpose, he would offer no objection to her entering the sisterhood. He hoped that in so long a period events would alter conditions in France so that she could be sent home in safety.

It was indeed the Comte de Miron whom Renée had seen as she looked out of the window. Tonti's sword-point in entering his breast had touched a rib and, glancing upwards, had wounded the lung tissue severely, barely missing the heart. The copious hemorrhage that followed well-nigh strangled him. His faithful coachman finding that he still breathed had taken him to a house on the outskirts of Paris, called a leech and summoned one of the Comte's friends, whose name he had given him before the duel for use in any such emergency. Together they combated the enormous loss of blood and weakness that followed. On convalescing, his friend, learning of the King's expression of satisfaction in the supposed death of the Comte, hurried him away to an estate in Brittany. There they abode together for many months, riding and hunting.

As spring came his faithful confidant went to Paris to see if it were safe for him to come to life again. He returned in a month with bad news. One of the Comte's numerous peculations in the State funds, which he had committed while Secretary to Colbert, had come to light, rendering it hazardous for him to appear again in Paris or even remain in France, for if by any chance he were apprehended it would mean the loss of his head. Accordingly, they laid their plans and he was hurried aboard the next ship that sailed for New France. This happened to be the one on which Renée travelled. Both of them seeking to escape observation seldom left their cabins. Hence it was that each was ignorant of the other's presence.

Bearing a letter to Duchesneau from a friend, the Comte presented himself at the Palace immediately upon his arrival. The Intendant welcomed him warmly, recognizing in him a kindred spirit; one who might be of great assistance in his various intrigues. Staying at the Palace he soon became acquainted with all of Duchesneau's friends and agents. It was there that he met Madame Bizard, who had come to make her regular report to the Intendant of all she had learned. He had refrained from going about the city to any great extent, hence had never seen Renée; and it was while on an errand for Duchesneau that he had caught a glimpse of Madame Bizard's

face at the window, and, remembering her invitation to call, had stopped. Well supplied with money, which he spent carelessly, he soon made many friends. Seeing the impression the young man had made upon the susceptible Madame Bizard, Duchesneau urged him to continue in his attentions, hoping that the young Comte might be thus thrown with Lieutenant Bizard in a friendly way and ultimately win him over to the side of the Intendant.

Frontenac before long became conscious of a new force that was aiding his enemy, insidiously undermining his influence among many of his adherents. He was at a loss to account for this, and it was some time ere he suspected the stranger. Finally, several discoveries confirmed his suspicions, and he realized that in the person of the young man there lay a useful ally for the Intendant and a dangerous enemy to himself. He was powerless to do anything, however, as the Comte, although an acknowledged friend of Duchesneau, was still louder in his professions of friendship and respect for the Governor and the Colony, so Frontenac was obliged to bide his time until by some overt act or word he would lay himself liable to legal interference.

The mischief that he made became so great that the Governor was desperate. At length an audacious speech made by the Comte de Miron

one evening was reported to him. He saw his opportunity. The Comte was brought before the Council, and several witnesses testified to having heard him boastingly remark that there was nothing like righting one's wrongs oneself, and that when the English cut off the head of Charles I they did a good thing, besides several utterances of a similar tenor. He was, therefore, accused of speaking ill of royalty in the person of the King of England, and uttering words tending to sedition. The Intendant and his followers in the Council did their utmost to protect their ally, but in vain. Frontenac's influence carried the day and he was adjudged guilty. The Governor forced the Council to impose the most humiliating penalty possible, in order to discourage any others from taking up the cause of Duchesneau. Accordingly, he was dragged ignominiously from prison by the public executioner and led by a rope around his neck, with a torch in hand, to the gate of the Château, there to beg pardon of the King; thence to the pillory of the Lower Town, where he was branded on the cheek with a fleur-de-lis and set in the stocks for half an hour; then he was led back to prison and placed in irons. This was to be repeated three times.

The man while passing through the terrible ordeal of the day had seen the face of Madame Bizard in the crowd, who smiled and nodded en-

couragingly. They had become great friends, and the Comte was glad to find one kindly glance. The room in which he was confined was on the ground-floor of the Château. Scarcely had he thrown himself exhausted upon the bed placed beneath the little grated opening that admitted air and light, when a summons at the door engaged his guard's attention for the moment. Just at this juncture the prisoner felt something drop on his chest from above, and saw that a tiny parcel had been thrown in through the window. He quickly opened it and recognized a key fitting his fetters, wrapped in a piece of paper, on which was written:

"Escape to-night at eleven; there is worse in store for you. You will find all the doors unlocked." There was no name signed, but he recognized the writing.

At dark his jailer left him and was replaced by four trusty soldiers of Frontenac. They examined his irons and then left him to himself, a seemingly half-unconscious being, huddled upon the bed near the door, which was fastened upon the inside by an iron cross-bar. After their conversation began to flag they stacked their arms, took the one light in the room to a further corner, leaving the bed in a half shadow, and proceeded to pass away the time with cards. The prisoner hearkened to a distant clock in the Château striking ten

and heard the sounds of closing the building for the night as the inmates retired. Carefully he inserted the key into the lock of the iron on his right hand, which was freed; then into that of the left, and it was liberated also. Slowly he reached down, watching with half-closed eyes the group of soldiers in the corner attentive to their game, and withdrew his legs from the encircling fetters. He waited impatiently for the clock to sound eleven and wondered what he would do if he found his information false. Perhaps it was all a trap to induce him to attempt to escape! He would chance it. Eleven o'clock struck; the players laughed guardedly at their game. He arose, and with one bound seized the four guns.

The rattling noise attracted the attention of the soldiers, who started up only to find their prisoner freed and with one of the guns pointed at them. Before they recovered from their astonishment he had slipped the bolt; the door swung open. Speeding down the corridor, he found the doors that barred his way were all unfastened. He heard the shouts of alarm raised by the soldiers; the last door opened into the night air; he was free!

The next day all Quebec was astir with search-parties hunting for the escaped prisoner; he was not found. The day after it was learned that Madame Bizard had disappeared also.

# Chapter Seventeen[1]

## SHOWS HOW CLOSELY THE FORTUNES OF LOVE AND WAR MAY BE INTERWOVEN

IF the French had dangers and disturbances within the citadel of Quebec, the white settlers and seigneurs outside the protection of its guns were menaced by perils even more deadly. The great Red Plague had broken out again. From the southward it came creeping up in tiny patches here and there throughout the forest, stealing noiselessly through sunlight and shade, creeping stealthily from tree to tree, gliding steadily onward towards the north. Often two or more of these patches met, coalesced, then moved ahead again, growing more wary as the river was approached, hiding behind rotting logs and beneath tangled underbrush all the day and issuing forth at night to resume the broken journey. At last the outer edge of the pest reached the brink of the St. Lawrence and peered furtively from behind the parted foliage for any

[1] The Author is indebted to Parkman's inimitable work for the main instance of this chapter.

sight of life upon the surface of the water, then retreated into the darkness, there to skulk in fiendish preparation. Along the shore it sped opposite Quebec and down the river towards the sea.

One night the settlers heard the moaning of the wind and the splashing of the spring rain, and smiled and thought how needful it was for the tender growing crops. But men neither smile nor tend crops when the Red Plague is abroad. That night the stream was crossed and the unseen scourge spread itself through the miasmatic bogs, hiding within the dark recesses of the virgin woods, all silent, mysterious, noxious. Then when all the clearings had been surrounded and the darkness of a cloudy night had rendered it a fit season for things foul and infernal, the pestilence lying dormant in the hidden places of the land awoke.

There was the silence of death without; no wind stirred the leaves; the very wild beasts had fled in terror, leaving their haunts vacant and dumb; the earth seemed to shudder as if in horror of the grewsome flood her surface would have to drink that night. A red light flashed its glare upon the darkness; a savage yell broke the tension of the awful moment; a woman's scream pierced the very heart of nature; a stream of blood gleamed near the flames — the Red Plague had come, and the woods were filled with the flitting

forms of human demons as the bloodthirsty Iroquois rushed to the attack.

After her recovery Renée had given herself over to her new work with an enthusiasm that the nuns applauded. Until she regained her strength she was kept employed with her needle. Eventually she was permitted to carry out her great desire, that of nursing the sick. Soon the fame of "*L'Ange*," the beautiful nurse, spread through all the town and many tales were told of her angelic sweetness by the poor fellows after their recovery. She was kept busy with her merciful ministrations, for the hand of disease lay heavy on the place that winter, and many settlers, their strength reduced by the scarcity of provisions, due to the crop's failure of the previous season, fell victims to numerous diseases and were brought to the nuns for their gentle care.

Often calls came from the outlying seigniories for nurses to go and attend those too ill to be removed to the city. These were cheerfully answered by the nuns, Renée going several times herself. It was in response to one of these demands in early spring that she begged permission of Frontenac to go. The Comte hesitated an instant, because the seigniory to which she was summoned lay some ten leagues up the river, farther off than any previous call had been. But

as there was no special reason for fearing immediate trouble with the Indians, and he could send a goodly party to escort her, he could not find it in his heart to refuse her urgent request.

The little settlement to which she went consisted of half a dozen farms, each with a house of the farmer upon it. At a spot centrally located was the home of the seigneur, flanked with various buildings, among which was a block-house where was kept the powder and other warlike munitions, including a small cannon. This was built to serve as the last defence against an attacking force. About the group of buildings was a palisade, with a bastion erected at each corner. In times of trouble with the Indians the families retired to this enclosure, abandoning temporarily their homes. The seigneur and his wife had spent the winter in Montreal, leaving affairs in charge of the head farmer. Through improper management two of the servants employed about the seigniory had fallen ill with scurvy and were in good chance of dying from sheer neglect, hence the urgent message for help sent to Quebec.

When Renée arrived there she found besides the sick men a couple of half-grown girls, two boys, sons of the seigneur, aged ten and twelve, and an old man of eighty, also the wife of one of the farmers, who stayed to do the cooking,

and two soldiers loaned by Frontenac to guard the seigneur's possessions in his absence. The other dependants were scattered about on the outlying farms with their families, all hands at work as befitted the season.

Renée managed within a few days after her arrival to secure some order out of the confusion, and her attention to cleanliness and matters of diet soon showed good results in the improved condition of her patients. The little spare time she had for herself she usually spent in walking down to the landing place or strolling along the bank of the stream. One afternoon while standing with the younger of the two boys looking up and down the river, while he played at skipping stones, she noticed several times a sound as of the muffled reports of fire-arms. Thinking it strange, she gazed in the direction from whence the noise came, and was surprised to see a woman suddenly emerge from the woods and run speeding across the clearing towards the house. "The Iroquois!" she cried in terror. Renée's young companion stopped his play, and, after shading his eyes and gazing intently an instant, seized her hand, exclaiming, "Run, Mademoiselle, run! Here come the Indians!" and as he spoke she saw some fifty or sixty painted savages break from cover. As they sped towards the gate, the brave boy urged her on, yet keeping a pace be-

hind so as to guard her. The distance was but short, and the Indians, seeing they could not capture them, stopped and began to fire. The bullets whizzed by the ears of the fugitives, but they remained unhurt. The woman reached the gate before them and would have shut it in their faces had not Renée called to her to wait. Once inside, the two fastened it securely. Renée hastened to find the men, but no one was in sight. There was little time to lose, so after sending the boy to find them she set about herself to inspect the defences. It had been so long since any danger had presented itself that they had been allowed to get out of repair. She found that several of the palisades had fallen down, leaving openings through which the enemy could easily enter. By this time the boy had returned, bringing with him only his brother and the octogenarian, both of them willing but feeble hands. The soldiers and the women were not to be found. With encouraging words Renée made use of the material she had, and with their assistance soon raised the fallen palisades into position again. She then directed one of the boys to fire at the Indians from the loopholes, while the other beat a drum violently. She then went to the blockhouse where the ammunition was stored and there found the two soldiers huddled up in a dark corner with the women folks, one hiding

his head, the other with a lighted match in his hand.

"What are you doing?" Renée cried.

"I shall light the powder and blow us all up," was the reply.

"You are a miserable coward! Leave this place!" was her contemptuous command.

Finding herself thus deserted of all expected aid, Renée's spirit rose, so, throwing aside her head-gear, she put on a man's hat and, seizing a gun, called to the two boys, saying, "Let us fight to the death. We are fighting for our country and our religion. Remember that gentlemen are born to shed their blood for the service of God and the King. I too am of gentle blood and will serve with you."

This resolute action and brave words changed the frightened soldiers, who came forward and begged her to command them. She accepted their services and ordered them to fire the cannon, not only to prevent the savages from storming the walls, but also to warn any outlying settlers. The Indians, always loath to attack a fortified place and not knowing the precise strength of the garrison, lingered near the edges of the clearing. She then quieted the women and children, and, choosing four of the former, furnished them with long sticks and bade them walk up and down just inside the palisade with

the end of the stick showing above, to deceive the enemy into thinking them to be sentinels. All seemed to become enthused with her spirit. She was everywhere, one moment encouraging the sick, another giving directions for the defence, another superintending the preparation of food for her tiny garrison. Luckily one of the cows, escaping the Indians, came to the gate and lowed for admission. This was a great acquisition, as she would furnish milk for the sick and the children, and, if the siege were prolonged, would insure a supply of meat sufficient to last a considerable period.

Just at sunset a canoe appeared from the river, containing one of the farmers and his family, who had eluded the redskins. Some reinforcement must be sent them, but Renée could prevail upon neither of the soldiers to go, so after leaving them at the gate she marched boldly down to the landing place. The savages, thinking this to be some ruse intended to draw them on to an attack, remained quiet. On the way back the boldness with which the party marched overawed them into thinking the garrison must be very strong, so they gained the gate in safety. Elated with the success of her audacious act, Renée decided to assume the offensive and gave orders to fire upon the enemy whenever they showed themselves. As night fell the sky was overcast and

threatened rain, which soon appeared. Even Renée began to lose heart; only for a moment, however. Summoning her force, which now numbered six men and boys since the new arrival, she addressed them resolutely. "Fear nothing. God has cared for us this day and will do so further, if we but do our part. To show you that I am not afraid I am going to mount guard myself to-night on one of the bastions." Then turning to the two soldiers and the man who had come with his family, "You, La Bonte and Gachet, and you, Pierre Fontane, go to the blockhouse with the women and children. It is the strongest place. If I am taken do not surrender, even though I be cut to pieces before your eyes. If you fight well the enemy cannot hurt you there." She then placed the old man and the two boys on three of the bastions and took the fourth herself. And through the rain and night the answering cries of those on watch reached the ears of the hidden savages. The place seemed to them full of soldiers and they postponed the intended attack.

Affairs went on thus for a week, the brave little general directing and supporting her forces, giving them each a share of sleep, but taking little for herself. At last the hostiles became impatient at being thus balked of their prey, and from their renewed activity it was evident that the

supreme moment would soon arrive. All day they could be seen gathering bundles of dry wood and piling them up ready to be placed along the outside of the palisade and then ignited.

Once more Renée was called upon to exert all of her influence to keep alive the waning courage of the garrison. One counselled that they all try to slip away in the darkness, another suggested anew his plan of assembling in the block-house and perishing together by exploding the magazine. To all of these Renée presented a scornful reply. "Are you men and fear to die when you have all the means of defence about you? And you," she cried to the women, "have you no faith? Are none of the prayers we have daily offered to avail anything? Surely *le bon Dieu* would not have allowed us to escape the destruction the rest have met with, only to deliver us into the hands of the enemy at last. Have courage, *mes amis!* Help will yet come."

She had scarcely spoken when one of the boys called out that there were six large canoes coming rapidly down the river and that the savages were already retiring. "It must be that the seigneur has heard of our plight and has sent us help from Montreal," cried one. Whoever it was, they were friends. As they landed and approached the fort the garrison crowded about the opened gate with gladness to welcome their

deliverers. Renée, proud and smiling, stood amongst them.

As the party drew near, the leader, a young man, stepped forward. "*Grâce à Dieu!* We have arrived in time. Where is your commander?"

Imagine his surprise when the figure of a nun, wearing a man's hat and still holding her gun in her hands, stepped forward and with a sparkle in her eye gave a stiff military salute, saying, "I am he, *mon General.*" Then as a feeling of unrestrainable weariness seized her frame, "The garrison is relieved; I resign my post; receive my arms." She attempted to hold out the gun to him as he approached, but her eyes closed, her body swayed, and she fell.

The young man sprang forward with a glad cry of "Renée, my beloved!" as he caught her falling figure. But the ears of the brave defender of the seigniory were dulled, so that she could not hear.

# Chapter Eighteen

## DEALS MAINLY WITH A GAME OF CHANCE IN WHICH FRONTENAC SHUFFLES THE CARDS

TONTI was welcomed by Frontenac with great rejoicing. The many tales of death and disaster, industriously circulated by La Salle's enemies, had caused many moments of anxiety to the Comte's mind, and he had come to fear lest, after all, they might be true, and he had lost both friend and future fortune.

Accordingly after dinner, the night of Tonti's arrival, they drew near the table, on which was laid the only map that Frontenac possessed of the western wilds. Having spread this out carefully before him, he turned to Tonti, saying:

"Come, *mon ami*, to your narrative! I am consumed to know each step of your perilous journey."

Then did Tonti commence and relate in full all that had happened to the hapless party in its wanderings, pointing out from time to time on the map the course of their progress. Frontenac interrupted him often with eager questionings, with exclamations of rage and alarm at

moments of peril, and with chuckles of delight and roars of giant laughter as he learned how difficulties had been overcome or enemies duped.

"*Parbleu!*" he exclaimed, "a worthy blow! And with your iron fist. A Mohegan chief?"

"Yes, beset in the street at Montreal by a half score drunken Iroquois as La Salle and I passed by. They went too far in their tormentings and tried to cut his ear with a hunting knife. I could not stand it and went to his aid. They fled, spitting out broken teeth as they ran, leaving the Mohegan brave with us. He begged permission to accompany us. It is he, Akiesko by name, who, with Pompon, has braved the dangers of our return to Quebec."

"That droll Pompon! His wit and cunning must have helped you many times."

"*Certainement!* Had it not been for him we should never have returned. His quick eye it was that saw something was amiss on Christmas Eve, as we sailed from Fort Frontenac across the lake, and perceived the rocks the treacherous pilot, bought with Duchesneau's gold, was driving us straight upon. He it was who, following La Salle's tracks in the snow, found him gazing at the Great Falls with the assassin creeping close behind him, and who fired the shot that pierced the brain of the wretch and sent him tumbling into the abyss as he was about to strike our

leader his death-blow. He it was, too, when on the banks of the River of the Illini La Salle informed us that one must remain and hold the fort with the men, while the other two must force their way back to Quebec for aid, that volunteered to accompany me. I can also witness to his cunning when, our journey eastward half completed, we were caught by the Hurons and would have perished miserably, both he and I and Akiesko, had he not had the lucky thought of feigning madness and leading the whole tribe a merry dance about the village, affording us an opportunity to escape. *Ma foi!* at times I believe he holds something more than brains within his head; methinks he has a devil! He also anointed his face that night with phosphorus paste so that when the savages followed him into the woods he turned upon them, his features all aglow in the dark, and they fled, giving him time to rejoin us. Then, too, the contents of his leather pouch afforded an antidote to the poison La Salle had eaten with his food, placed there by another of the Intendant's accursed agents among our men."

"*Peste!* what villany will not that rascal stoop to in order to gain his ends! But how about our noble friend La Salle? You say you left him at this point on the River of the Illini, after building a fort you named 'Crève-cœur'? Why call it the Fort of the Breaking Heart?"

"Ah! *mon ami*, our commander named it that, out of the depths of his own grief and discouragement, after overcoming dangers and difficulties that would have turned back any other man a dozen times. *Mon Dieu!* now that you have me upon the subject of the friend I have learned to admire and love as my own brother, I can talk all night without stopping. What think you, after the final wreck of our little vessel and its stores at the mouth of the Niagara River by our unfaithful pilot, and the desertion of a goodly portion of his men, did he despair? *Mordioux!* no. A shrug of the shoulder, a firm pressure of the lips, a straightening and stiffening of his body, as though to withstand an attack, were all the signs of the disappointment he showed. His voice was the gayest and the load upon his back was the heaviest of us all as we climbed up the steep bank and through the snowdrifts, bearing what remained of our supplies to a place of safety. Treachery met him at every hand; the very men whose burdens he had tried to lighten and whom he had watched and tended through sickness and starvation turned against him, thwarting his plans and crippling his resources. Even now, while I sit here, he is grappling with danger and disaster. Is it any wonder that for such a leader Pompon, Akiesko, and myself gladly risked our lives to return to Quebec for aid?

"With the eye of a general he has planned the winning of all that great land for the King and Holy Church, and has decided upon the spot to be first seized and held. A short distance up the river from the point where I left him is a giant rock, impregnable if once securely fortified, that will serve as the beginning of a new empire for France, and will preserve it against Indian and white man alike, besides forming the centre of a vast trading enterprise. This plan, if successfully carried out, will give us the key to the whole situation. Ah! *Cielo!* M. le Gouverneur, if you do not give me aid, and that soon, his great heart will break. When final disappointment comes to natures such as his, there is no other end."

Tonti spoke with feeling as he leaned toward Frontenac in his earnestness.

"*Bravo!*" cried the Comte, and his huge hand came down with a clasp upon Tonti's as it rested on the table. "You do not disappoint my first estimate of you. You are indeed a worthy associate for the courageous La Salle. With a score of men like you two, I could conquer and hold the entire New World."

Thus they talked and planned to meet the great demands that the emergency required for the successful issue of the great enterprise until day dawned. And as they strove, the patient heart of their comrade alone in the wilderness

with a handful of mutinous men yearned for the succor so desperately needed, and his eyes beheld above the forest tree-tops the breaking of another day of hope and endeavor undismayed.

Meanwhile Renée was welcomed heartily by the nuns, who attributed the intense nervous excitement under which she was laboring to the dangers to which she had so recently been exposed. She quickly sought solitude in order to think out some plan of action. She had learned from one of the women standing by all that had occurred at the gate of the seigniory after she had fainted, and her heart was filled with rage and shame. The poisoned lie told by Madame Bizard had done its work. Tonti, the ideal, the hero; Tonti, the gallant and brave; Tonti, the fairy prince, the possible lover the chance of meeting whom had rendered her exile bearable, was dethroned, and she saw in him only an ordinary man, impure, base, deceiving, an enemy to be avoided. Although no words of love had passed between them, yet the remembrance of the budding passion that she had recognized within her breast scorched her brain anew. As long as he was far distant she had been able to try bravely to overcome her disappointment, but his proximity had aroused within her a sense of danger and a desire to flee. Banished from her home through a peril she could not combat, she

found herself surrounded by fresh hazards. She had fled to the convent to escape the Comte de Miron, and now like a hunted animal she sought a new refuge as another enemy appeared in view.

The rumored presence of the escaped Comte as leader of a band of the murderous Iroquois rendered her unsafe except while under the direct protection of Frontenac. The arrival of Tonti, whom her unsettled imagination pictured to her as having abandoned his comrades in the wilderness, was a menace even under the sheltering walls of the fort.

That night she attended a meeting of all the nuns and heard a letter read from one of the priests at Michilimackinac brought by a messenger who had joined Tonti at Fort Frontenac, in which was depicted the pitiful condition of the Indians and whites who were suffering from an epidemic of smallpox, and imploring the aid of two nurses to assist the three already there. The message, frank though it was in relating the hardship and dangers inevitable to one responding to this Macedonian cry for help, came to her as the trumpet-call to duty as well as an avenue of escape. The Superior announced that they would be able to spare but one nun for the work, and would appeal to the *données* for a volunteer to accompany her. Only one responded; it was

Renée, who arose and offered herself for the service.

She hurriedly sought Frontenac the next morning to obtain his consent. She found him busily engaged at his desk, but he brushed everything aside as she entered and arose to meet her with a smile.

"*Bon jour, ma chère* Mademoiselle," he exclaimed, "I am relieved at having you back once more under my eye. I was wrong to expose you to the peril that you have so fortunately escaped. I promise you I shall be more careful in the future and shall keep you safe beneath the guns of Quebec and allow no more pilgrimages into the wilderness."

"Pardon me, my protector, if I seem wilful," responded Renée, "but I have one boon to ask of you that you must grant or I die," and she fell upon her knees, stretching forth her hands appealingly.

"*Ma foi!* my fair petitioner, it would ill become my strength to refuse aught to one in such extremity. But come," he continued in a kindly tone, as he raised her, and leading her to a chair, insisted on her being seated. "Tell me of your troubles, for that you are in great distress I can well see. Remember I am devoted to your interest, and you may need an older head to solve some of your problems."

The fatherly note in his voice, his gentle insistance, came as an infinite relief to Renée's troubled mind. Here was strength for her weakness, counsel for her perplexity. The extreme tension she had been under rendered her woman's heart susceptible to these kindly words, and she buried her face in her hands and wept violently. Frontenac drew his chair near and strove to quiet her with compassionate words and light stroking of her hair, as a father would comfort an unhappy child. Gradually the sobs ceased, and Renée told him of her decision.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed in astonishment, "leave the security of the fort for the thousand perils of the wilderness? Impossible! It would be the rankest folly."

Renée then opened her heart to her companion, and the iron-gray head of the doughty warrior was bent in wondering interest at the recital of the perils of the girl, the depth of a woman's love, the wound a feminine heart can suffer and yet live, and the strength of purpose of a noble nature that has resolved to conquer, even though it be by flight. She told of the Comte de Miron, of his duel with Tonti, of her adventure in the chair, of her love she felt to be returned, of the appearance of the Comte in Quebec. As regards Tonti she contented herself with saying that she had learned that she was

mistaken in her estimate of the man, that he was all unworthy of her love, and that, in short, she had ceased to love him. Her reticence as to the cause of her change of feeling, the vehemence with which she expressed her dislike, and the evidences of mingled shame and hurt pride in her tone, caused Frontenac to smile indulgently. He listened patiently until the end and then dismissed her, saying in a soothing tone: "I will consider the matter, *ma chère*, and if I can find no other remedy, believe me I shall not stand in your way of escape from this rascal, but shall aid you all in my power."

Renée thanked him and arose to go. As she passed through the anteroom she was startled at finding Tonti standing by the window, evidently awaiting an opportunity to see the Comte. He too was surprised at beholding her, and bowed low as she passed, muttering some commonplace greeting. She, however, neither noticed his bow, his words, nor himself, but with eyes fixed in front of her, passed rapidly through the door with an air of haughty pride and disdain that would have done credit to Mademoiselle herself, and was gone.

Frontenac saw this by-play and laughed at the rueful countenance with which Tonti greeted him.

"There seems to be some mistake," he said. "You apparently think you know the fair *donnée*, while she believes differently. Ah! you knave,

trying your fascinations on every pretty woman you meet!"

"Pardon, M. le Comte," replied Tonti stiffly, "but I knew the young lady before leaving France, hence my salutation. She probably did not see me."

"Very likely," responded Frontenac dryly. "Since you know her so well she will probably tell you how it happens she is here and all about herself. It will save me the trouble."

Tonti grasped him by the wrist nervously. "Come," he said, "you are my friend. Tell me when and why did she leave France?"

Frontenac, seeing the young man's earnestness, good-naturedly told him of the arrival of his charge.

"She has fled from Louis," murmured Tonti. "But why this garb of a *religieuse?*"

"To escape the attentions of a worthless adventurer who came in the same ship. She wished to become a nun, but I was not willing to allow that."

"Wished to become a nun!" exclaimed Tonti in astonishment. "How can that be? She loves La Salle, and he is devoted —"

"Loves La Salle!" laughed Frontenac long and loudly. "Ho! ho! my friend, I happen to know better than that."

Tonti's face flushed angrily. He took a step

forward, crying, "*You* know? What can you know, — unless, *par Dieu!* you are wooing her and intend to marry her yourself?"

Frontenac fairly choked with merriment at these ireful words. When he was able to speak again he said:

"*Mordi!* one at a time! Do I want both ears boxed? But come, my warlike friend, sit down and evaporate your wrath."

Tonti took several strides up and down the room, then turning to his companion, exclaimed:

"Pardon, *mon ami*, but I am distracted and know not what I say. Hear me, and decide if I have not reason for my madness. I meet a beautiful woman in Paris. I worship and adore her. She is friendly. I leave France; and my comrade, he whom I have sworn to aid and defend, confides to my honor a mighty secret, tells me that he loves the same woman, and that he has every reason to believe that he can win her. Two years later I approach a besieged seigniory in the wilderness and find her, the woman I love and whom I left across the seas, as the defender of the post. I meet her here; she will not even recognize me. You talk of her and tell me she desires the convent and the veil. *Mon Dieu!* what am I to believe?"

"You have never told her of your love?" asked the Comte in return.

"I could hardly do so after my friend and companion had honored me with his confidence, little dreaming of my own feelings toward her," replied Tonti proudly.

Frontenac watched the young man musingly. "One can never know a woman's mind. If Madame Bizard were here—"

"Madame Bizard?" cried Tonti. "She has never known her?"

"*Certainement!* It was to her charge that I confided the girl when she first came."

"*Misericorde!*" ejaculated Tonti. He then related to the Governor the details of the attempt to entrap him through the agency of that woman before he had left Quebec.

Frontenac opened his eyes and whistled softly. "She then has reason to dislike you. She offered to become your dishonorable friend; you repulsed her, she accordingly became your dishonorable enemy. I see," he muttered to himself after a moment's thought.

"See what?" exclaimed Tonti.

"Nothing," was the mysterious reply, "except the sunlight advancing along the floor, which reminds me that time passes. Perhaps I may find a solution to your riddle some day."

After Tonti had left the room Frontenac sat awhile buried in thought. At length his brow cleared, his lips parted in a smile, and he laughed at

some idea that occurred to him. He evidently relished his little joke, for the next week the mere sight of Tonti or Renée in the distance was sufficient to set his sides a-shaking. The savor of his jest was so enjoyable that it kept him in excellent humor at the next Council meeting, so that for the first time since the arrival of Duchesneau there was absolutely no friction. His merriment even followed him into sleep, and he found himself awaking with a laugh on more than one occasion.

He sent for Renée one day, and, taking her hand in his great palm, said kindly: "*Ma chère*, I have been considering the request you made me, and am persuaded that you are right. I believe indeed it is for your best happiness that you should go. I will send you on to Montreal with the nun that accompanies you, there to await the arrival of the rest of the expedition that I am dispatching to the relief of La Salle, and which will be large enough to protect you. Then," he added with a twinkle in his eye, "I know you will not find in the woods another rascal as base as you believe M. Tonti to be."

To Tonti he said in farewell:

"I have been thinking over your predicament of mind, and can give you no solution now. Time will determine all things and set matters right. Now banish all thoughts of love, and

back with all speed to your comrades. I have made arrangements for the most important load of all to be shipped from Montreal. When you arrive there you will receive it. Guard it with your very life, and convey it in your own canoe, as it will prove indeed to be a treasure for La Salle."

He watched Tonti's figure grow smaller and smaller in the distance, and finally turned away with a sigh and the enigmatical remark, "I have done the best I could. If they do not find themselves, it will not be my fault."

As they paddled up the stream on the return voyage, the men kept time to an old *chanson* that they sang lustily. Tonti did not join in the song. His mind and heart were filled with a strange perplexity. He had been unable to see Renée again during his stay at Quebec, and rumors had reached him that she had left again for some distant point on an errand of mercy. Her refusal to recognize him still rankled in his heart. He knew not what he could have done to merit her disapproval. He had intended speaking to her of La Salle and telling her of his bravery and determination, thinking that she would be content to talk of him, and thus, although it were to discuss the excellencies of his rival, he would find a certain sweet satisfaction in being with her. Then, too, what would his comrade think when he told him

that he had seen her, and yet brought no message from her? A feeling of weariness passed over him, that weariness of living that comes at times to every man, as the result of baffled endeavor or hope deferred, that clogging effect of our imperfect human nature upon the ever-buoyant spiritual. But the thought of the patient, steadfast heart awaiting him, that wavered not nor faltered, although surrounded on every hand by foes open and secret, by the giant obstacles of Nature, and the checks of chance and circumstance, quickened Tonti's fortitude and purpose, until his paddle cleft the water and tossed its glistening spray as gallantly as any *voyageur*.

Renée awaited at Montreal the arrival of the party with a feeling of relief and happiness. The voyage from Quebec had been made without discomfort, and as the long leagues were left behind her spirits had risen, and she had given herself up to the enjoyment of the healthful, vigorous life about her. At length it was announced that the fleet had arrived, and her escort was in waiting. She thereupon repaired with her companion to the river-side to embark, with a light heart, full of hope for the long journey before her. Upon nearing the designated place she caught the glint from the paddles of a group of canoes that had already started, and saw the one remaining craft that awaited their arrival. On reaching

the landing, she beheld the leader engaged in conversation with one of the fur-traders. He turned toward her, and she recognized in him the man from whom she had fled. She saw him start and flush, as though with feigned surprise. She stood rooted to the spot in astonishment and anger. How he could have learned of her proposed expedition she could not comprehend, as she had taken great care at Quebec that her destination should not be known; no one but the Superior and Frontenac knew, and she did not believe that either of these would betray her. The presumption of the man who, knowing her aversion to him, had forced his society upon her was insufferable. But nothing could be done now. The remainder of the canoes had already departed and there was no escape, so summoning to her aid all the pride of a race that for generations had conquered or suffered, as the case might be through their haughtiness, she disregarded the doffed cap and proffered arm, and took her appointed seat without a word.

# Chapter Nineteen

## IN WHICH THE PERILS OF THE DEEP ARE MET, AND POMPON CLIMBS A TREE

THROUGH the long sunny days, past cape and river-mouth, flower-fringed bank and wooded islands, the expedition hurried on without let or hindrance from human foe or Nature's adverse whim. Renée contented herself with conversing in low tones with her companion, whilst Tonti from his position in the bow neither spoke nor turned his head. On landing he superintended carefully the erection of the bark hut that sheltered the women for the night and made all ready for their occupancy. Their meals were cooked and served as daintily as the rude means available would allow, the Mohegan hunter in some mysterious manner always providing fresh fowl or fish or tender bird to tempt their appetite. To him and to Pompon who served them Renée was all graciousness; but Tonti, who cared for every detail and who, unknown to them, slept before their door each night, received no thanks. He did not attempt to force himself upon them, maintain-

ing always a respectful distance and a demeanor full of deferential courtesy. Delightful as these attentions would have been from the Tonti she had first known, they became under the circumstances anything but agreeable, almost unbearable; for it seemed to Renée that, perceiving, as he must, her repugnance for him, he was choosing the most successful way to torture her and render her miserable. And so the bitterness in her heart for the man she had once loved increased.

At length the distant glimpse of the walls of Fort Frontenac was hailed with delight as being the end of the first stage of their long pilgrimage. They landed amid the welcome of guns and shouts of men. Tonti provided the commanding officer's house for the use of Renée and the nun, and detailed one of the mission girls to wait upon them. A slight delay was necessary here in order to transfer the contents of the canoes to a small twenty-ton vessel that was placed at the disposal of Tonti. With this the men were to sail directly across the lake to the Niagara River and haul the goods to the fort before Tonti reached it. This would save some time. He preferred to coast along the southern shore of the lake with his party in their canoe, a procedure less dangerous as well as one of greater comfort for his passengers. While these matters were being arranged, Renée and the nun wandered about the Indian

settlement near the fort, viewing their mode of living with much interest, as this was the first glimpse of an Indian camp that they had ever had. They were received with kindness, and sought to relieve the sufferings of two or three of the old men of the tribe who were bed-ridden.

One day Renée had allowed the nun to return to the fort ahead of her and was sauntering along the edge of the lake. She finally stopped at a point overlooking the water and stood gazing at the scene spread out before her. The distant buildings of the fort and the curling smoke from the fires of the Indian encampment were the only signs of human habitation visible. Behind her, a few yards distant, was the dark green of the primeval forest, while in front and on one side stretched the watery wastes of a great sea. Her thoughts passed over the restless surface of another greater sea to the land of her birth, and a feeling of loneliness came over her as she realized her isolated position, and she wondered at the strange vicissitudes of the life that *le bon Dieu* had led her through. The recollection of that bright day at Choisy came to her afresh, when in her girlish eagerness she had penned the words of the song she had sung; penned them to the throbbing of a heart newly awakened to the first tender thrills of a strange, new passion that seemed to satisfy all the yearnings of her nature and made all things

new. "Until he comes," she murmured in a saddened, dreamy retrospect. Ah! why had he not come — or rather, why had he who had come not proved worthy? Was love, then, all a dream; were no men deserving; was there not one who would merit all that rich store of heart and mind that she felt was hers to give? Would he come to her in this vast wilderness? Ah! when and who?

"I am come," spoke a familiar voice in a hesitating tone, and then stopped.

She wheeled quickly about and saw Tonti standing a few paces behind her. She had been so busied with her own thoughts that she had not heard him break through the cover of the wood and approach. On his back was a huge load of small balsam boughs that he had cut. He threw them down beside him, and, removing his cap, continued:

"Pardon me, Mademoiselle, if I have frightened you. I have been gathering fresh material for your bed hard by. I fear you have rested ill on the solid matted mass you found already there."

Renée's eyes blazed. "Do you not know, Monsieur, that your attentions are distasteful to me, that I would rather sleep upon the bare ground than upon a downy couch that you had prepared?" she said.

Tonti was startled at her heat, and his cheek reddened. He answered, however, in a calm voice:

"I am come, as I was about to tell you, to thank you for a service rendered me, and to ask you to hearken to the few words I have to say. Will you not listen to me?"

"I can hardly choose but hear," was the disdainful reply, "since you are standing in the only path by which I can escape."

The young man stepped to one side, leaving the way open, and said with a serious haughtiness in his voice: "I do not wish to detain you against your will. 'T was but a simple civil request I made, and one that I felt I had a right to expect would be granted."

Again Renée broke forth:

"Right! What rights have you over me that I am bound to respect?" Then feeling herself the ungraciousness of her speech, she continued more quietly: "Go on; I will listen."

"I wish to thank you, then," began Tonti, "for your assistance in my escape from Paris. It was admirably planned and all the arrangements were perfect. I feel I owe it to you that I was not detained in France as the result of the unfortunate ending of my duel with the Comte de Miron."

"How know you it was I? Could not any

one of the numerous female friends you must have at court have done as much?"

"True, Mademoiselle, but they would not. Court friends are but friends if all goes well with one. When adversity sets in they speedily forget you. You will pardon me if I say that I knew of no one save yourself who would show such disinterested kindness to a man in need of aid. Besides, I chanced to see at Quebec a note addressed to Frontenac that he said he had received from you. The handwriting was the same as that which was handed me after the duel."

In spite of herself, Renée felt a thrill of pleasure as she heard the expression of his high opinion of her. This, however, was instantly replaced by a feeling of chagrin, as she realized from his last words it had been after all but a surmise on his part.

"Grant, then, that it was I," she said. "It was but repaying a debt I owed you. It was because of me that the quarrel originated. I would have done as much for any man. We are then quits."

"I dared not hope it was for any personal reason," replied Tonti sadly. "But tell me one thing, Mademoiselle, and I shall weary you no further. What have I done to merit the disdain you have shown me ever since we met in

New France? Of what wrong or discourtesy have I been guilty?"

"No wrong have you done *me*," was the animated reply. "If you will know I shall tell you. It is because of the disappointment I can but feel to find that I have aided one so unworthy; because of the shame at recalling that those lips that have uttered such false vows have pressed this hand. If you seek further reason, go to your wife and child so cruelly abandoned in Paris, find Madame Bizard, ask them. Meanwhile, know that your presence is distasteful, that I scorn to receive your attentions; in fact, that I hate you!" and Renée pressed her hand to her heart, that throbbed "I love you" in spite of her words.

Tonti gave a start of surprise and murmured, "That woman again!" Then gathering himself up proudly, he replied: "What evil deeds or crimes you may impute to me I know not. I shall, however, continue in my duty to my friend, and not desist in my endeavors for your comfort and safety. I thank you for this interview;" and gathering up his load, he bowed and left the spot, angry with himself at finding that in spite of her wrath she was magnificent, and realizing how deeply he loved her.

Within a few days all was ready for their departure. The men sailed away in the vessel

laden with stores and provisions, while Tonti embarked with the two women, Pompon, and the Mohegan warrior in a large canoe, and, turning its prow southward, soon crossed the end of the lake in safety to its southern shore. Toward Renée he maintained the same attitude that he had before their recent interview. Again was her comfort sought in every way. When the wind blew strong or the weather threatened, a stop was made and they delayed until the skies had cleared and the water was once more calm. Game was not abundant, but fish were easily caught. Occasionally, when this diet became unpalatable, a camp was built, and several days were spent at rest, while the Indian made a trip toward the interior for venison or bear. No savages were seen, and Tonti hoped to be able to pass by the country of the Iroquois without meeting them. Over one-half of the distance was traversed without mishap, and they were opposite to that portion of the country inhabited by the Senecas, the westernmost nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, when disaster overtook them.

They were proceeding along close to the shore because of the slight roughness of the water, and were making all haste in order to get over this stage of their journey as rapidly as possible, when they suddenly struck against the ragged edge of

a rock just hidden beneath the surface of the water. Such was the force of the blow that a large rent was made in the bottom of the canoe, which quickly filled, careened to one side, and threw its occupants and contents into the lake. On coming to the surface Tonti beheld Pompon (who could not swim) clinging to the slippery surface of the tiny point of rock that had done the mischief, the canoe sunk, and the two women, whose clothing served to buoy them up, struggling wildly. With a shout to the Mohegan to save the nun, who was nearest him, Tonti himself struck out for Renée. Although the shore was some two hundred yards distant, there was nothing to do but to swim for it. He seized the girl at the waist with one hand, while he strove with his legs and the remaining arm to urge her toward a place of safety. It was hard work, however, as the clothing that he wore was made of skins and soon became very heavy. Renée, too, frightened at the sudden plunge, struggled to free herself from his grasp. He finally calmed her, and telling her to rest her hand on his shoulder, he was able to make good headway.

"Why did you not let the Indian save me?" she murmured.

"Because I, not he, am responsible for your safety," was the reply.

Soon they reached the land. Tonti was much

exhausted by the struggle, but supported his fair companion to a dry spot on the sand and then turned his attention toward the rest. Pompon still clung to his precarious perch. The Mohegan and the nun, however, were in a bad plight. Terror seemed to have bereft her of reason, and she clung to her rescuer with a firm grasp, impeding his progress. Tonti saw that they would never be able to reach shore under the existing circumstances, shouted that he was coming, and, after throwing off his well-soaked coat, plunged to their rescue.

It was time that some help arrived, for the nun had now clasped the man about his neck with a grasp that he was unable to shake off. Before Tonti had covered half the distance they sank from view. They soon reappeared, however, struggling anew. They were well-nigh exhausted and remained on the surface but a moment. Tonti called encouragingly, but they did not hear him, and sank again. As he reached the spot where they had disappeared, the head of the Mohegan arose from the depths, but he was alone. Breathless and half drowned he was, and Tonti had to support him to enable him to regain his strength. He soon learned that the nun had maintained her grip on the Indian's neck until they had sunk the second time and had only released her hold when they touched the bottom.

Tonti then dived, but to no purpose, and yet a second time; she was not to be found.

Feeling his own strength beginning to fail, and knowing that the strong undercurrents had probably swept her body from that locality, he turned his attention to Pompon, who was making vigorous signals of distress, leaving the Mohegan behind to swim about and watch for the nun's reappearance. He reached Pompon, who had been occupied in slipping from the rock and clambering up again, just in time, and with him in tow turned toward the shore. The Indian soon relieved him of this weight, for he was fast reaching a condition when he would need help himself. As it was, had the shore been a dozen yards farther off he could not have reached it. He managed, however, to touch bottom and crawl out, throwing himself upon the sand, utterly exhausted. Renée, who had watched his brave efforts, ran to him, and loosening the sodden clothing about his neck and chest as best she might, chafed his hands anxiously. Forgotten for a moment was the past with the lies whispered by Madame Bizard into her unwilling ear, and she saw only her lover and hero, engaged, as when they first met, in bravely defending and rescuing those in distress; saw him, as she had dreamed of him so many times before, boldly battling for others, recking not of the tremendous

odds against him; saw him victorious, yet vanquished. And as he fell her woman's heart beat fast with sympathy and alarm. Her touch seemed to invigorate him, for in a few moments he opened his eyes, breathed deeply, and murmured, "*Grâce à Dieu*, you are safe! But the nun is lost; I did my best."

Renée as soon as she saw that he had revived dropped his hand and contented herself with telling him of her appreciation of his superhuman efforts, assuring him that she was unhurt, and although lamenting the loss of her companion, expressed her thanks that the remainder were saved.

They were all indeed in a sorry plight. Not daring to light a fire, if they had had the means with which to do so, for fear of attracting the attention of the savages, they were unable to dry their clothes. Luckily the sand was warm, and by lying on it they were able to gather sufficient heat for comfort. Aside from their proximity to the dreaded Iroquois, other dangers threatened them. All of their guns, ammunition, and provisions had been lost in the wreck of the canoe; they were thus without food and with the prospect of a long weary march before them. After consulting among themselves, it was determined to make for Fort Niagara as rapidly as possible. Akiesko climbed the nearest tall tree to get a view of the surrounding coun-

try. He could make out no signs of Indians. They remained where they were for a day in order to regain their strength. During this time the Indian was able to set a trap and caught a rabbit, which he brought back in triumph. This had to be eaten raw. It was not a palatable dish for Renée, but she recognized the necessity of fortifying herself against the fatigues of the journey and bravely ate as much as she could. A few berries were also found.

They made but a short distance the first day, as Renée, unaccustomed to walking far, soon became foot-sore. They followed the shore of the lake as closely as possible, both because of the easier walking found there and also to keep near a supply of fresh water. At night they sought shelter beneath a tree, and each of the men took turns in watching, while Renée, wrapped in Tonti's coat, slept soundly after the fatigue of the day. They proceeded thus for a week, scantily supplied with food, although Akiesko exerted all of his skill and ingenuity in his endeavors to entrap small game or catch an occasional fish, and they had progressed so far that Tonti began to feel easier as to their ultimate safety. One day they were resting about noon beneath a tall fir-tree when Pompon was suddenly seized with the desire to climb to the top after a possible nest that he thought he spied high up among the

branches. He had hardly reached the upper limbs when Tonti, glancing up, was attracted by the vigorous signs he was making. They were signs of alarm and caution. The rest immediately became silent and waited. Within a moment there emerged into the little clearing near which they stood a band of some two score warriors, evidently a hunting party from their dress. At the same instant they caught sight of the little shipwrecked group beneath the tree and advanced toward them with a shout. Tonti stepped forward and made signs of peace. The Indians proved to be a band of Senecas on their way to the lake to fish. Their leader stepped a pace nearer than the rest, and, addressing Tonti, said with a grunt, "Who are you?"

Tonti replied: "We are friends of the great Onontio of Quebec. He sends his greetings to his children and bids you aid us. We have lost our way and ask you to help us. If you will furnish us with food and a guide to his house by the Great Falls he will reward you."

"The hand of Onontio is weak, and he sometimes sleeps. We have not seen him for a long time; perhaps he is dead. He does not love us or he would not send the black gowns among us to bewitch our children, nor the traders who cheat us of our skins. If you were his friends he would not have allowed you to start upon so long a

journey without providing you with food and guns. My white brother lies. The French at the house beside the Great Falls are not our friends, for they have made our young men drunk with brandy and then killed them. I can do nothing for you; you must return with us to our village. There the great chief Wolf, he whom you French call 'Le Loup,' will decide."

Resistance was useless, as during this harangue the savages had scattered and now completely surrounded the party. A seeming friendly compliance was the best course, so Tonti replying said:

"We will go with you to your village and there smoke the peace pipe with your chief. He will restore our strength and go with us to the Great Falls and receive his reward."

The party then took up their return march. Tonti and his companions were not molested in any way, but were treated with all kindness. He kept near Renée, who, affrighted at the sight of so many half-naked redmen, seemed to forget her former antipathy and imperceptibly moved closer to him. Pompon, unseen, was left behind, sheltered by the branches of the giant fir.

# Chapter Twenty

## IN WHICH SOME DISCOVERIES ARE MADE

THE advance of the party was not rapid, because of the inability of the captives to make long marches. The leader was evidently a subordinate chief who feared to ill-treat his white prisoners lest the responsibility of having provoked hostilities with the French should be laid at his door. At night a special shelter was provided for Renée, while Tonti and the Mohegan were permitted to rest on the ground near by. Four of the number were detailed to procure food, which they did in great abundance. An offer was even made to provide a sort of bark litter for Renée, swung from the shoulders of two of the braves. She refused this, however, as it would have separated her from Tonti, whom she silently appealed to more and more for protection. He noticed her changed demeanor, but attributed it to the fact that he was La Salle's friend and the only white man present. After the little camp was still at night he heard the call of a distant screech-owl that he recognized as the signal of the ever-faithful Pompon, who was

evidently following on their trail. On their journey to Quebec, after escaping from the Hurons they had devised a code of signs in case they should ever be separated. The number of hoots corresponded to a letter of the alphabet, the whole preceded by three series of cries of three calls each. Thus Tonti was able to spell out during the night the communication intended for him. "C-o-u-r-a-g-e," came the cheering message, "I s-h-a-l-l f-i-n-d m-e-a-n-s f-o-r y-o-u-r e-s-c-a-p-e."

Six days they journeyed thus. At length on the morning of the seventh the far-off barking of dogs was heard, and the prisoners knew they were approaching their destination. About noon they came upon a clearing about ten acres in extent, situated on a plateau overlooking a beautiful lake some half-dozen miles long. On this plateau about sixty dwellings of varying sizes were scattered irregularly. Their advent was heralded by the yelping of a horde of naked children, who surrounded them, followed by a swarm of Indian curs, who barked vociferously. The warriors bestowed a succession of cuffs and kicks when they approached too near, and led the captives to one of the smaller lodges, which was unoccupied.

The sides of this house were formed of a double row of tall saplings planted firmly in the ground, whose tops were bent over and lashed

together at the top to form the roof. The many interstices of the branches served for the escape of the smoke from a fire which smouldered on the ground in the middle of the floor. Over all were spread sheets of bark like the clapboards of a civilized dwelling. From a number of cross poles near the roof were suspended a quantity of skins, clothing, pieces of smoked meat, and rows of dried ears of maize. Around the interior, about three feet from the ground, ran a shelf or scaffolding, covered with a few mats and skins, which evidently served for sleeping places for the inmates. Here in an atmosphere rendered almost unbearable by the heat and smoke of the fire, the three prisoners were left to await the return of the head chief and his men, who were off on a hunting expedition for the day. A guard at the door prevented any intrusion, and the weary travellers were left in peace. Tonti managed to collect a sufficient number of skins to curtain off one end of the room and form a soft pile on which Renée could rest. She received this thoughtful attention without thanks, but yet without the resistance with which she had formerly met Tonti's kindly offices.

The two men retired to the other end of the lodge and conversed in low tones concerning their future disposition. Tonti was inclined to consider that the arrival of the head chief would

result in their being set at liberty and a safe conduct being furnished them as far as Fort Niagara. Akiesko took a more gloomy view of their situation. The recent attack on the white settlements along the St. Lawrence by the Iroquois and their repulse, would probably make them at least unfriendly toward the French, while the fact of their being at continual warfare with his own tribe would render them apt to seek revenge for former hostilities on the person of the captured warrior. Tonti assured him that he would demand his safety and release as strongly as his own, and felt that the offer of the reward he would make would overcome any feeling of enmity they might have against his nation.

Toward night the noise of the returning braves was heard and the hum of many voices telling of their success came to the ears of the waiting French. The sound approached the lodge where they were, and soon the doorway was darkened by human forms as a group of men entered. Tonti stepped forward to meet the famous chief whose terrible name had reached his ears when he had stopped at Fort Niagara, as he heard a voice inquiring in guttural Iroquois for the prisoners. One of the Indians threw a quantity of light fuel on the fire, causing it to blaze up suddenly and illuminate fully the gloomy interior. Tonti was somewhat surprised at seeing the small stature of

the renowned chief, as well as the light tint of his skin. As he took a further stride, Tonti started back in astonishment, as he recognized the painted features of the man.

"*Mille tonnerres! Le Comte de Miron!*" he cried.

The warrior, too, made a sudden spasmodic movement of surprise as he stared at him. He speedily repressed this emotion and bowed gravely with a ferocious gleam in his eye, while the outlines of a branded fleur-de-lis on his cheek seemed to glow through the paint, as he replied in French, "M. le Capitaine Tonti, I believe." His glance chanced to wander toward the other end of the room, where Renée, awakened from slumber by the noise outside, had pulled aside her curtain and stood with white face and pupils dilating with horror. He made an eager step forward in ready recognition. Then turning to his Indian companions, he dismissed them by a gesture and the three whites were alone, save for Akiesko, who retreated to the darkest corner.

"Well, friends," he said with a demoniac smile, "we are well met. You, Monsieur, who thought me dead two thousand leagues away, and you, Mademoiselle, who had forgotten me and who are more beautiful than ever even in your convent garb, indeed do me honor," he continued in a mocking tone, "to have come so many weary

miles in order to visit me in my savage lodge. It must have been a difficult journey that you have made, you two together — alone." Here Tonti, who had recovered in a great measure from his surprise, flushed red and involuntarily felt at his side for his sword. "Nay, curb your restive spirit," was the taunting reply to his gesture. "It is not seemly for guests to seek a quarrel with their host. Besides, you have not the means of defence you had that cursed day, when you nearly snuffed out my lamp of life with your steel blade. For shame, a lady present, too, to see such a display of your angry passions!"

"Have done with your insolence," replied Tonti haughtily, "and send us on our way to Fort Niagara with all possible speed."

"*Ma foi!*" cried the Comte in mock surprise, as he turned toward Renée, "did ever you see such indecent haste in a visitor to leave his entertainer? 'T is monstrous! Why, he has scarce arrived and yet he talks of his departure. Nay, nay, my gallant friend, it would be scant grace for me to serve a guest so. For my guest you are and I can promise you rare entertainment," he continued, as a baleful glare of mingled hate and triumphant revenge darted from his eye. "Such as you, Monsieur, have never before experienced, and which I believe will convey a lasting impression to your mind, while Mademoiselle will

be so delighted that I fear she will be loath to leave."

"Coward!" hissed Tonti, beside himself with rage, as he advanced with shaking fist upon his enemy. "How dare you insult Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise and myself with your veiled threats and cursed insinuations! Whelp of the Devil's breed! Were I but crossing swords with you again I should make surer work than I did before."

The Comte de Miron now threw aside his mask of courtesy, and, white and trembling, faced his foe. "We are not in France nor shall we fight with swords. Frenchman no longer, I am an Indian now, and with savage weapons shall I strike. At Paris you won; the dice are changed and now 't is my throw. There you had friends and we were equal in power. Here you have none, and my will is law. Am I not the head chieftain of the mighty clan of the Wolf? A thousand wait but to do my bidding. You are indeed in my power, and you shall feel the exercise of it."

Then turning to Renée he continued vindictively: "Your lover shall be the sport to make an Indian holiday. You shall see those lips that have murmured soft of love pierced by the savage needle; those arms that have clasped you close shall shrivel up in the hot flame; those eyes that

have cast upon you their amorous glance shall be torn out and thrown to dogs to lick. While you," the man continued, raising his voice and foaming at the mouth, "you, the delicious morsel I have so long waited and yearned for, the ripening fruit that I have watched from afar, shall be mine, mine, and you shall learn that it is better to be the squaw of an Iroquois chief than the lover, mistress, or wife of the bravest swashbuckler or roisterer on earth."

A snarl as of some maddened animal goaded beyond endurance escaped from Tonti, and with a spring he had clutched his adversary by the throat with one hand, while with his upraised iron member he was about to deal a blow that no human frame could resist, when he was quickly seized and torn away by two warriors, who, hearing the excited tones of their chieftain, had entered in time to save him.

The Comte stood gasping, feeling his throat where the imprint of Tonti's fingers were visible.

Tonti's breast heaved from the sudden fierce exertion, and as he stood held by each out-stretched arm, his figure tense from the effort to free himself, he flung defiance at his adversary:

"Hell-hound! fiend! renegade! do you seek to terrify me with your menacing words? Am I a child to be frightened by the sight of your ugly face? What care I for the horde of painted

devils at your back, surrounded by those who obey your call? Here, defenceless, in the midst of your allies and friends, I say do your worst, torture me if you will, but I shall still defy you. Know this as well, that all your plans shall be for naught; that I shall conquer yet, and escaping, shall return to wreak my vengeance."

The Comte had now regained his power of speech.

"Silence, vain braggart! Escape? Thanks for the word; it reminds me that I must separate you lest you kill one another and I shall find you cold in each other's arms. I will fetch my squaw and she will lead my lady yonder to a fairer bower." And motioning to the two men who held Tonti to release him, he strode through the door with them at his heels.

Renée, who throughout the interview had remained motionless, now ran lightly to Tonti.

"Ah! M. Tonti," she exclaimed in an alarmed tone, "what shall we do? Why have you a second time provoked this man and roused the hatred of one who cannot stoop too low to gain his ends? Had you been calm he might have been prevailed upon to allow you to go unmolested. Now he will never be satisfied until he kills you. It was brave; it was noble; it was magnificent; but was it wise?"

"Ah! Mademoiselle," said Tonti with a shade

of reproach in his voice, "how could I remain calm beneath his insults to you? You, whose honor I would defend with my last drop of blood, whose safety is my one thought, for whom I would face a hundred savages rather than that one hair of your head should be injured —" He suddenly ceased speaking as though struck dumb, for as he gazed at the girl who stood with one hand involuntarily stretched toward him, wide-eyed and motionless, he saw as by a lightning flash within her glance that which stopped his heart and sent a strange chill through his frame, for in that instant he saw deep into her very soul and read the secret that she had guarded so well. It was but an instant, for he quickly passed his hand before his eyes and recovered himself. "Nay, it is not strange, Mademoiselle," he resumed, "that I should speak thus, for I love La Salle, and he loves you, and I am pledged by all the claims of friendship and loyalty to bring you safe to your journey's end."

Before Renée could reply the Comte entered, followed by a squaw. Hardly had she seen the prisoners before she uttered a cry, and Tonti stared in bewilderment into the face of Madame Bizard. It was indeed she, but how changed! The roses had left her cheeks and lines of care and suffering were strongly marked about her eyes. Clad in the slatternly dress of an Iroquois

squaw, she had lost the trimness of figure that had been her chief attraction formerly. No longer were the lashes drooped in coquettish glances, but a hunted look had taken their place. The Comte stood watching them, smiling grimly. "So it seems that you two are acquainted."

Madame Bizard then seeing Renée for the first time, rushed to her and clasped her arms about her, weeping violently. This action displeased her lord, for he advanced and, grasping her roughly by the shoulder, pulled her away, giving her a rude shove that sent her rolling on the floor. He then seized her by the hair and pulled her up into a sitting posture, crying brutally, "Get up or you will fare worse." The poor woman did not seem to think this treatment at all unusual and meekly did his bidding. "Take Mademoiselle to her lodge and serve her wants," was the next demand; so, beckoning to Renée to follow her, she led her out.

They passed to the adjoining house, which had been hastily prepared for its new occupant. Some attempts had been made at cleaning the place, a large number of skins and rugs having been spread about. Renée's companion was silent until they had entered. After casting a backward glance to see that they were not followed, she fell on her knees and burst into tears. Renée, who pitied her forlorn condition and remembered

her kindness to her when she first arrived at Quebec, strove to soothe her, and the kindly womanly sympathy thus displayed had its effect, for soon the tear-stained face was raised and a sad smile lighted up her features.

"Ah! Mademoiselle," she murmured, "you are so good to pity an unfortunate castaway like myself. I have sinned deeply, but I have been cruelly punished. Since seeing you I have had time to reflect and realize how great a wrong-doer I have been. Many a night have I lain awake in my misery, and thought of all the happiness I might have had, but which I thrust aside. You can see the misery of my fate without my telling you. However, it is your future that troubles me, for rather than see you in his power I would bury a knife in his hateful breast. But tell me how you happen to be here?"

Renée then rapidly sketched the events that had led up to their journey and the adventures encountered since then. As she told of Tonti's efforts at the time of their shipwreck, Madame Bizard's eyes glowed and a faint tinge of color returned to her cheeks.

"How brave he is, and how noble! My love told me that he was good and worthy —"

"Your love!" exclaimed Renée.

"Yes, my love, for I will confess it to you, Mademoiselle, — I loved him. It was my in-

sane love that drove me to tempt him to the very act to which the Comte yielded. But he was strong, and rebuked me, shaming me for the thought."

"But you told me—"

"Yes, but I lied. My heart was full of bitterness at finding him so much better than I; for his teaching me that a man's honor was even stronger than a woman's. It was the desperate memory of his refusal of my suggestion to fly with me that drove me mad, and made the society of my husband, yourself, and all who were good and pure a torment, and was the goad that urged me to the step I took. But my repentance has been bitter."

"And his wife and child abandoned in Paris?" eagerly asked Renée, as she clutched the woman by the arm, her breath waiting on her reply.

"More lies. I could find nothing bad enough to say about him. I hated him for the deep humiliation he had caused me, and loved him all the time for his nobility of heart. He spoke of one in France whom he adored. I would have given my right arm to have heard him speak of me with that same feeling and reverence in his tones. Now all is done, and it is too late for repentance. A weary life of servitude amongst these savages is my portion. I can do nothing to retrieve the past, unless indeed I could effect your escape.

That would I gladly do were I to pay for it with my life. Have courage, Mademoiselle, I shall accomplish whatever I can for you."

But Renée heard not the wail of regret nor the woman's determination to redeem her wrong. Her eyes streamed with a strange peaceful light of happiness. In her mind stood forth her lover as she had first believed him, worthy, after all, in spite of the calumnies of his enemies. Nay, worthier, for had she not now proof of temptation resisted, his love for her constant and enduring? The gold had been tried and had come forth from the furnace unstained and with a brighter luster than before. Her heart was filled with joy at the glad discovery, and she found it possible to forgive his detractor, and imprinted a kiss of forgiveness, sympathy, and pity upon her cheek.

That night a solemn council of all the chief men of the tribe was held in one of the largest houses, to decide as to the disposition of the prisoners. Before this assembly the Comte de Miron arose in all the insignia of his official position and spoke thus:

"My brothers, it is not many moons since we returned from a war against the French. We returned, but with how many less than when we set out let the fatherless children and the weeping squaws tell. One of our prisoners is a Mo-

hegan dog; he is ours to torture. But as to this white chief, hear me. Some have accused me of being still a Frenchman; learn this, then: I know this man. He is a friend of the great Onontio at Quebec whose soldiers drove your braves back and shot them as they fled. His death would be a greater blow to Onontio than the capture of a dozen settlements. He it is who built the house beside the Great Falls, who sent men there to steal your skins and murder your braves when they resisted. Here is your revenge. I am your brother; I am no longer white; let this prisoner die. Take him, I give him to you; the white woman, however, belongs to me."

A murmur of assent went round. The prisoners' fate was sealed.

# Chapter Twenty-One

## WHEREIN A BATTLE IS FOUGHT AND AKIESKO COMES OFF VICTORIOUS

THE prisoners slept little that night. Both Renée and Tonti had undergone a nervous excitement during the day sufficient to keep every fibre tingling, he at the discovery of her love for him, she upon learning the truth from the lips of Madame Bizard. Now that the heat of his encounter with Miron had subsided, Tonti fell into a slough of despair. Escape seemed impossible. Renée's fate became more hideous now that he knew her secret. Even the satisfaction of dying together was denied them. Renée was happy, rejoicing in the restoration to his proper place of the lover she had vainly sought to forget; unmindful of the terrible ordeals the future might have for her; believing vaguely that the discovery of her lover's faithfulness was not for naught; that a means of escape would be accorded to them.

Akiesko alone of the three prisoners had neither hope nor fear. He faced the dawn of the day of suffering with the stoicism of his race.

He knew that he would be sacrificed first, in order to whet the appetite of the people for blood so that the torture of Tonti would be a season of greater enjoyment to his captors. Help, unless it came within a very few hours, could not rescue him, even if it were to arrive before Tonti's turn came. A feeling akin to sorrow invaded his savage heart at the thought of the disappointment and injury that would come to La Salle from the loss of Tonti. A feeling of pity for the white girl, whose days thenceforward would be a death in life, then followed. Last of all, the hatred of his tribe against his enemies surged across his mind, obliterating all other feelings, and his thoughts were filled with plans how to endure his pains bravely and give defiance to them until the very last.

Thus passed the weary hours of darkness to the three captives. The camp was astir at dawn, and the sound of voices and din of preparation for the day's festivities smote ominously upon their ears. Food was served to each at breakfast time. They were not disturbed during the morning. After noon they were summoned to the beginning of the Saturnalia of bestial cruelty.

In an open place in the centre of the town were gathered the Indians, who ranged themselves in an elongated circle, down the centre of which were piled at intervals seven brush heaps ready

for lighting. Equidistant from each end a small scaffold some six feet from the ground had been built. On one of them Miron had reserved a seat, one on each side of himself for Renée and Tonti, so situated that they would be witnesses of the ensuing scene. He greeted them with a sardonic smile, and wished them all manner of pleasure during the coming hours. Tonti's hands were securely bound, but his feet were free.

They were scarcely settled when an opening in the throng on the opposite side was made and through it Akiesko was led, with every mark of respect and attention from those attending him. His escort consisted of some thirty or forty of the young men of the tribe, who advanced singing and dancing. The prisoner strode along haughtily in their midst, clad in a magnificent beaver robe, with a string of polished multicolored shells about his neck and a smaller one placed like a wreath or crown about his head. He was greeted by a friendly shout from the waiting crowd. The procession marched about the edges of the throng, so that all could catch a glimpse of the condemned. Finally they conducted him to a log placed in the centre of the open space and he was seated. Food was set before him, sagamite, squashes, venison, and fruit. As his wrists were bound, one of the chief men was deputed to feed him.

"Here, my nephew," he said gravely and in the kindest tones, "eat of this food your friends have prepared for you. It will give you strength. Eat and have no fear, for no one is doing you any harm. Behold thyself now among thy kindred and thy friends."

When this portion of the repast was finished, a dog which had been placed in a kettle near by and boiled, was produced, and being cut into pieces of convenient size, was presented to the prisoner to taste. Upon his having done so the remains of his feast were removed. His hands were loosed and he was invited to sing. A hush fell upon the multitude as he arose to give utterance to his death-song. Straight and firm he stood with outstretched arms, from which the folds of beaver skin fell in graceful lines. His head was proudly raised, his eyes looking above the crowd eastward toward the land of his birth. His voice, now quavering in a strange, weird minor cadence, rising and falling, lingering on the words with a pathetic tenderness, now full and strong in sonorous monotone, rapidly delivered, penetrated to the farthest ranks of his foes.

"I see afar the wigwams of my people. The smoke rises from a thousand camp-fires and the woods are filled with the countless moccasin prints of the hunters. They creep here and there

through the forests. The deer and bear fall in multitudes before them. Where are the waters dark with fish but yesterday? The streams are there, but the fish have gone, for the Mohegans have passed by and taken them all. There are no hunters like them anywhere. All other nations are but as children whom they have taught to use the bow and spear. Were they to leave their own country, all the rest of the world would starve, for there would be no game left. The sun here is dim, but there it is always bright, for my people do no evil and the sunlight never fails them. The wind blows fresh and bends the tops of the waving maize fields, for there the harvests are ever full. The Iroquois plants his seed and but one appears. The Mohegan drops his into the ground and lo! a thousand sprout from one. I see the Council fires ablaze, and around them sit the wisest of all men. To their feet come the chiefs of other nations and crouch, waiting to hear the wisdom that falls from their lips. There is the source of all knowledge and cunning; that of all other people is but foolishness. Above their heads hang the scalp-locks of their enemies, thick as the leaves of the forest in summer, for there are none so brave as they, the sound of whose name makes their enemies to tremble and be afraid."

Thus sang the helpless prisoner, boasting in

the presence of his foes of the prowess of his tribe. As his song progressed, his body swayed to the rhythm of his voice. Soon he moved in stately measure to and fro, as he described the delights of his own country, the pleasures of his own people. Then the theme was changed, the steps were quickened, and the words flowed faster as the deeds of the mighty warriors were rehearsed and his own achievements were boastfully proclaimed.

"But among them one place is empty. It is that of Akiesko, the greatest sachem of them all. 'Where is Akiesko, our brother?' they ask of one another. 'There is none so brave or wise as he.' 'He is gone,' says one, 'to the wilderness where live the ignorant Iroquois. He has taken pity on their blindness and will teach them many things. They cannot hunt; they cannot fish; they are but squaws fit only to sit and pound the maize between two stones. He will show them how to live. They have no courage. At the barking of a wolf they run; the sound of an owl at night causes them to tremble.'"

The movements of the singer became more rapid and he passed gradually around the open space. One by one the fires were lighted, and each of the surrounding crowd armed himself with a piece of bark; lighting one end of this, they waited. The motion of his dance gradually

loosened the robe around the prisoner, which he allowed to slip off and he continued his steps naked. As he passed along, the waiting blazing bits of bark in the hands of his tormentors were applied to his back, his arms, and his legs, inflicting painful burns. The victim did not wince, but went on faster and faster, never stopping his song for an instant.

"Akiesko will show the poor Iroquois how to live. He will also show them how to die. They will drink of his blood; and their own, which is only water, will become thick and red. They will eat his heart and it will make them men; they will be squaws and children no longer, but will become warriors. My brothers, Akiesko is going to die. Amuse yourselves boldly around him; he fears neither tortures nor death."

The dance became faster and more furious. A growing excitement moved the throng, a shout of delight went up as one buck ran behind the prisoner, and pressed against his back the red-hot head of an axe; the sight of the smoke arising from the burning flesh and the odor that was wafted to their nostrils served further to stimulate the minds of the onlookers. Renée shuddered and closed her eyes. Miron noticed it, and, turning to Tonti, said loud enough for her to hear, "Is your seat comfortable, M. Tonti? If not, I have provided another for

your use to-morrow. It is a pointed stake. I fear it would be tiresome standing out there on your feet the whole time, as your Mohegan friend is doing." Tonti disdained to reply, but strove to convey by a look to Akiesko his feelings of sympathy for his sufferings and commendation for his bravery.

Gradually the lust for cruelty in the savage breasts broke beyond restraint. Now one rushes towards the dancing figure and, seizing his hand, tears loose a finger-nail; another coming from behind cuts his flesh; still another thrusts a pine splinter into his shoulder and lights it. Cries of exultation are heard on all sides. Above it all, clear, but with waning strength, comes the taunting voice:

"The Iroquois are squaws who shudder at the sight of blood. They are but children at the torture. They cannot cause a Mohegan pain."

Wilder and wilder goes the dance, louder and yet more loud rise the hoarse triumphing cries of the fiendish persecutors. At length the prisoner's vigor shows signs of exhaustion. He stumbles and falls, but is up again with a louder tone to his voice and a more agile movement than before. His face is now no longer recognizable. Long thorns have been thrust through his cheeks and forehead, and masses of clotted blood hang from his eyebrows. The flesh of

his body drops in torn shreds. The surface is covered with an oozing stream of blood. At length he staggers and falls fainting. His tormentors seize him and lay him upon the hot ashes of one of the fires; the pain revives him and he jumps up and passes on. Again he falls. This time they pour fresh water over his burns and wounds and give it to him to drink. The refreshing coolness recalls him once more to life and misery. He is dragged up the steps of the scaffold and made to stand erect, his arms stretched over and fastened to a cross-piece, thus suspending him so as to throw his weight upon his wrists.

Pandemonium is let loose. The crowd of yelping, screeching demons surrounds the scaffolding. He gazes at them and a smile breaks on his lips, as with eyes glaring with hatred he reviles and mocks them.

"Dogs of Iroquois, why do you not make me cry out with pain, like one of you would do if a bee stung him? It is because I am a Mohegan chief, brave and without fear."

Heated stones are now placed beneath the soles of his feet; one stands above and slowly pours boiling water over his head; another now approaches and empties a gourd full of the scalding stuff down his throat. A red-hot iron is passed into each eye, burning the socket empty. A young buck climbs upon the cross-beam and

deftly scalps him, holding up the gory trophy to the shrieking throng below. Suddenly a silence. The end is near. Every human voice is stopped, and only the repressed breathing of the infuriated mob is heard. Sightless, quivering in awful agony, the prisoner's undaunted will summons his remaining strength for one last defiance. "Cowards! Dogs!" he gasps, and in the tone issuing from scorched and lacerated lips, one perceives the intensity of scorn and hatred felt. His head droops; a shiver runs through his frame. At this signal a chief leaps forward with flashing knife and with quick stroke lays bare the still feebly palpitating heart, removes it, and tosses it to the waiting braves, who quickly cut it into tiny pieces and devour it raw, believing that thereby they each may acquire some of the bravery of the dead prisoner. Another cuts down the body and half a dozen quickly sever arms and feet and legs, throwing these members into the waiting boiling kettles, to be devoured later by the whole tribe. The head is cut off and brought, a shapeless, blood-stained mass, and laid at the feet of Miron.

Tonti, sickened at the fearful sight, turned his head away and looked towards Renée. Her woman's nature had mercifully asserted itself. She had fainted.

# Chapter Twenty-Two

## SHOWING HOW MIRON HELD A GOOD HAND, BUT POMPON PLAYED THE ACE OF TRUMPS

THE captives were led back to their respective prisons after this sickening scene of barbarity, and soon a silence fell upon the camp as though the inhabitants were fatigued by the excitement of the day and had sought repose. Renée had nerved herself to witness the horrible spectacle and had borne herself bravely throughout until the last, but when she found herself once more alone and conscious, a reaction set in and she became but a weak and trembling woman after all. Tonti, used as he was to the scenes of carnage of civilized warfare, could not repress a shudder as he recalled the recent ordeal. His chief anxiety was now for Renée; for himself he had faced danger and death too many times to experience any fear at their proximity; he would sell his own life as dearly as possible, and promised himself that more than one recruit for the happy hunting-grounds would be started on the long journey thither before they

would have him lashed to the stake. He realized that neither of them could hope anything from the mercy of the Comte. Their only chance would be through the opportune arrival in the camp of some party sent out from Fort Niagara in search of them. This was, however, hardly possible, as any such expedition would naturally follow along the shore of the lake even as far as Fort Frontenac, before they would turn back or think of visiting any of the Indian tribes. To be sure, Pompon had signalled to him before they arrived at the camp that he would effect a rescue, but he would not have had the time to procure assistance and there was but little reliance to be placed on his ability to achieve anything alone. The Comte would not allow his people to be deceived by any tricks that he would play, as had happened at the time of their Huron captivity, and, aside from some such measure, Tonti feared that for once the little fellow's wit would be lacking.

It was while absorbed in these disconsolate thoughts that his quick ear caught the sound of some small object striking against the bark covering of his lodge. He listened. Again it came and yet again; then it ceased, but soon recommenced. Three times three did he count, and then he understood it was a signal from his trusty friend, probably produced by lightly tapping with

some hard substance against the exterior. He repaired to the back wall from whence the sound came, and placing his lips close to it he gave a slight cough. He then heard a low whisper:

"It is I, Pompon. Go to your door and see if the guard is awake, and make no noise."

Tonti did as he was bid, and peeping out saw the sentinel seated before his prison asleep, but in such a position that it would be impossible for any one to either enter or leave the place without arousing him. Tonti reported the fact to Pompon, who replied:

"It is well. I will cut a hole in the saplings wide enough to pass you a knife. You can then work from the inside to enlarge the opening while I am employed out here. Madame Bizard is assisting Mademoiselle at this moment. Make haste."

Soon Tonti heard a strip of bark cautiously give way, and ere long an opening large enough to admit a hand was made. Through this Pompon passed a knife. "Work diligently, but noiselessly, *mon Capitaine*," he urged, "and we will soon have you freed."

Tonti turned to with a will, and between them they soon had, by dint of cutting and pulling at the interlacing branches, an aperture formed, through which Tonti squeezed himself. He seized Pompon's hand in silent pressure, and the

two stood with straining ears, fearful lest the noise they had been compelled to make had been heard. There was no evidence of this, and they both tiptoed to the back of the lodge in which Renée was confined and assisted Madame Bizard in her similar endeavors. Pompon in some unaccountable way had placed himself in communication with this poor creature, who, true to her resolve to aid, had entered heartily into his plan. She had seen to it that the guard at Renée's door received a sleeping potion that Pompon had prepared out of the contents of his indispensable pouch, and was thus able to enter without detection, stepping lightly over the sentinel's recumbent figure. Their work was finally accomplished, and Renée was assisted through the opening and was followed by Madame Bizard.

As has been said, the village was built upon a plateau overlooking the lake. The houses in which the prisoners had been confined were erected within a few feet of the edge of this plateau, which ended in a sheer precipice some fifty feet above the surface of the water. As assistance and escape were deemed impossible from this direction, no attempt had been made to guard the rear of the lodges. As the little party stood together, Tonti was puzzled as to their next step. Before he could say anything, Pompon explained the situation to them.

"I have not been idle the past two days. I saw the only avenue of escape and have prepared for it. I have succeeded in twisting together a number of strands of grape-vine long enough to reach to the bottom, and while the noise of the feast was in progress I managed to scramble up the face of the cliff with one end of the rope in my teeth. I have fastened it securely about the trunk of this tree. After we have descended Madame Bizard will cast it loose, and it will delay them in finding out the direction we have taken. I have captured a canoe, which we will find on the shore below, in which we can gain the other end of the lake six miles away before our escape is discovered."

The preparations were now made to descend. Renée kissed Madame Bizard on each cheek in token of her gratitude, while Tonti expressed his thanks in whispers. They both urged her to flee with them and thus elude the clutches of the Comte forever, Tonti offering to place her under the protection of the next party going from Fort Niagara to Quebec, thus enabling her to reach a place of safety, and affording her an opportunity to seek her husband's forgiveness and make amends for her past misconduct. She shook her head sadly.

"Alas! no," she said, "it is too late. The Comte would reach me with his vengeance sooner

or later, while if I remain here the end will come all the sooner."

Finding her immovable in her determination, her companions again bade her farewell and turned their attention to their own escape. Pompon let himself over the edge first in order to steady the rope from the bottom for Tonti and Renée in their descent. The hour was long past midnight and the late moon had already risen, making the spot on which they stood a dangerous one. Tonti therefore, with Renée clinging to his back, began the descent. The bottom as well as the side of the cliff was enshrouded in deep shadow and he was obliged to rely upon the shaking of the rope as a signal that Pompon had reached the bottom and was ready for their downward journey.

Slowly they went, his strength taxed by the additional weight of his sweet burden, while his every nerve was on a tension for fear of discovery before they reached the ground. Madame Bizard leaned over the brink, watching them as they disappeared in the shadows. Suddenly Tonti felt a thrill as of some one shaking the rope. Looking up, he saw Madame Bizard making warning gestures and then suddenly disappearing. He remained perfectly still, clinging to the vine. Soon he perceived the approach of another figure near the edge and he beheld the form of the Comte de Miron standing leaning against the tree

around which their rope was fastened and looking over the lake. Full in the moonlight he stood, visible to those below him, who were hidden from his view by the protecting shade. His rest had been evidently disturbed by the thoughts of the near approach to the consummation of his desires, the humiliation of his enemy, and the winning of her whose possession he had long wished for.

Tonti braced himself against the cliff-wall and scarcely breathed for fear of imparting motion to the rope and causing some sound above that would betray them. Relief soon came, for the image of his foe vanished and in a moment the head of Madame Bizard showed itself again, motioning him to proceed. He did so hastily, as the strain on his arm was terrific. They had reached a point a couple of yards from the bottom when Renée, who had seen all that transpired, suddenly relaxed her hold, unable to maintain it any longer, and dropped. She struck against Pompon's shoulder, glancing off and falling lightly to the ground. A cry of suppressed pain came from her lips, however, for one foot had turned upon a stone and wrenched her ankle. Tonti hurriedly raised her and helped her into the canoe which was waiting a few feet away. Madame Bizard then threw off the coil of rope about the trunk and waved her last farewell. It was in-

deed her last, for when the escape of the prisoners was discovered, she was suspected, and fell before a blow from her infuriated paramour. Thus did she give her life as the penalty for attempting to atone by one good deed for the wretched frailty of her past.

Pompon seized the grape-vine rope and stowed it away in the canoe in order to leave no trace behind of their flight, and jumping aboard, they were once more afloat. At first they paddled cautiously through the shade at the water's edge until they were out of sight of the Indian camp. Then they struck boldly out, making the boat fairly fly over the water in their haste to place as great distance as possible between themselves and their pursuers. A strict silence was maintained, broken only once by Renée, who applauded Pompon for the ingenuity and boldness of his plan. He was gratified at her praise, and replied:

"*Ma foi!* Mademoiselle, there was no other way. If a man does not enter a tiger's den he cannot get her cubs."

Just as the first pink tinges of the coming day appeared in the east they reached the upper end of the lake. Here they landed, and after placing several huge stones in the canoe, Pompon cut a hole in its side, and giving it a shove sent it out into the lake and watched it slowly sink, murmuring:

"A sad way to treat a friend who has aided you."

He then produced a small stock of provisions that Madame Bizard had hastily gathered and given him. This consisted of a piece of smoked meat and some ground maize. A portion of this sufficed for their breakfast. They were about to start on their journey again when it was found that Renée's ankle, which had swollen visibly during their passage over the lake, pained her so severely when she touched the ground with her foot that she was unable to walk a step. This was a grave question, for every moment lost at this stage of their progress made the chances of their recapture all the greater. There was no time to devise any means of transport for her. One thing only could be done. Tonti arose to the occasion.

"Mademoiselle," he said apologetically, "remember that all our lives are in danger, and that this is no time to consult your preferences. You must proceed. You cannot walk; permit me to walk for you."

"How?" queried Renée in a puzzled tone.

"*Ma foi!* I must carry you."

He had expected an outbreak at this proposal, or at least a strong resistance, but she only flushed, and, looking down, said:

"You are the commander of this forlorn hope,

Capitaine Tonti. If there is no other way, I suppose I must be obedient."

Thus they started off, Pompon in the lead, with Tonti bearing Renée in his arms close behind. At first her cheeks were a mass of flame and her head was well averted. But gradually the pressure of the great strong, protecting arms about her brought to her mind a sense of infinite relief and restfulness, while the tact and consideration for her embarrassment won for him her deepest thanks. Thus it was that she strove to make the burden lighter and the way less tedious by her cheerful words and bright smile.

For Tonti it was exquisite torture. He knew that it but needed a word from him and the tired head would rest upon his shoulder once for all; that the recital of his love would bring a like sweet confession. But he steeled his heart as he thought of his friend waiting for him so many leagues distant, who, knowing all other men to be false, held faith in his constancy and loyalty. Thus he fought the two battles daily, hourly: the outer one against the physical fatigue and hardships of the journey; the inner and greater task, the unrelenting conflict of a man struggling against himself.

The first night they encamped on the mossy banks of a bubbling spring, cold and clear, that, overflowing its bounds, trickled off and dis-

appeared among the trees. Tonti, on returning from an exploring expedition in the neighborhood, found that Pompon had prescribed the application of the cooling water to the inflamed ankle and had employed a little of the yellow salve possessed of wonderful curative powers that he always carried with him.

The next morning, after a meal that still further diminished their stock of food, and a refreshing draught at the spring, they resumed their march. They were headed in a westerly direction that would eventually bring them to the Niagara River. It would then be easy by following its course to reach the fort. Naturally, Tonti made but slow progress, handicapped as he was with the double load. The second day ended without any signs of pursuit, so that they began to feel easy in regard to that point. But an equally serious danger presented itself. Their food was almost exhausted and they had no means of obtaining more. A few berries here and there were all that they had been able to find. Pompon had made numerous efforts to kill a bird or rabbit, but without success. They struggled bravely on. At length after two days had passed without their having had a morsel with which to renew their strength, Pompon resolved on desperate measures. They were still so far from their destination that at their present progress it would take a week

before arriving there. But Pompon knew that it would take longer still, for he had watched the increased efforts made by Tonti to cover the accustomed distance; had seen his feet falter, and tottering take the place of the firmness of stride and spring of step that existed at first. He thought carefully, and finally announced that he had found a means of providing them with food on the morrow.

"Wait until morning and I promise you both shall have something to eat."

In the morning, when Tonti arose, Pompon was nowhere to be found. On a strip of bark beside the spring was a quantity of pounded maize and a tiny piece of smoked meat. Tonti understood it. Pompon had secreted a portion of his food each day and saved it for some such emergency. His disappearance he readily interpreted as an effort to advance at a more rapid rate than was possible with the others and secure assistance.

Renée exclaimed at Pompon's forethought, and made Tonti eat the larger share. They proceeded together as best they could the next two days. At length Tonti, completely worn out, awakened to find himself so weak and giddy that he could not rise. There was but one thing to do; they would have to await the result of Pompon's errand. If he himself were to fall by the

way they could at least die together. Two days more passed. The two lovers, their hearts filled with the calm joy of a known but untold love, watched the evening shadows descend almost with the fear that the morrow might bring the aid that would at once save them and banish forever the sweet season of companionship that had been theirs. Tonti awakened before dawn. The thousand confused voices of the night were hushed as if in expectant waiting of the coming day. Far off he heard the quavering call of a night-bird, that he recognized as the voice of Pompon. Nearer and nearer it approached. He answered it; again it came louder and clearer than before; and just as the sun's first ray touched the tops of the trees surrounding the little hollow in which they lay, a crashing sound was heard and a dozen soldiers, headed by the figure of their faithful little friend, appeared, bearing them aid and sustenance.

# Chapter Twenty-Three

## CONTAINS SOME HAPPINESS, A COMPACT, A VISION, AND A CALAMITY

ARRIVING at Fort Niagara, Renée was turned over to the three nuns stationed there. They sympathized with her in her hardships and gave devout thanks for her escape. One of them was filled with zeal to take the place of her who was drowned on the trip, and, much to Renée's delight, obtained permission to leave for Michilimackinac when the vessel started. A week was lost perfecting all arrangements. At the end of this time both Tonti and Renée were ready to proceed, although the latter was still unable to walk without support. The men with the stores had transported them from their boat, at the mouth of the river, to the fort. Tonti chose two vessels, the larger one for these supplies and the men conveying them, the other, smaller, for the use of his party, which was now increased by the addition of one of the priests from Fort Frontenac who decided to take advantage of this opportunity to push on his way westward.

The tiny cabin was fitted up for the two women so as to be as comfortable as possible. A plentiful supply of provisions was taken, although for fresh meat they depended on the success of their hunts on shore. The larger boat started first, with orders to stop at Michilimackinac only long enough to apprise them of the coming of the nurses and then proceed to the fort on the Miami, there to build a sufficient number of canoes while awaiting Tonti's arrival.

The day of their departure was auspicious. A fair wind ruffled the deep blue surface of the lake; the sky was clear and the summer sun warmed without smiting them. Renée's heart danced in unison with the boat for sheer happiness. Her presence was a delight to all on board. The priest, when not engaged with his breviary, listened with pleasure to her chatter, while the nun soon loved her as her own sister. Even Pompon so far forgot his hostility to the sex as to condescend to entertain her at times with tales from his adventurous life, or amuse her by exhibiting the contents of his wonderful leather pouch, showing the phosphorous paste that had stood them in such good stead during their Huron captivity, the sleeping powder whose power the innkeeper at Ecouen and the Iroquois sentinel had tested, and the yellow ointment possessed of most extraordinary heal-

ing virtues for wounds that he had employed upon her ankle. He often talked to her about Tonti and found in her a willing listener to all the praises of his hero that came so readily to his lips. Thus a real amity sprang up between them, which was finally sealed into a solemn compact one day when Tonti lay asleep and Pompon managed the boat. He had been dwelling upon his friend's loyalty to himself and La Salle when Renée said musingly:

"Would that I were a man that I might become a fourth comrade to you all, but I am only a woman, weak and alone. However, I can still be a friend if my friendship is worth aught to any one. Come, M. Pompon," she said, rousing herself, "I have that from the other two. May I not find in you a friend and ally also?"

Pompon looked at her outstretched hand gravely for a moment. "It is not a light thing you ask. False friends are worse than open enemies. I will, however, on one condition" — here he looked her steadily in the eye while speaking — "that condition is that you be a true friend indeed to him," pointing to the slumbering Tonti, "for your faithfulness means all in all to him."

"Agreed with all my heart," replied Renée, flushing lightly as she clasped his hand. Pompon saw her look, and a gleam of satisfaction shot

across his face as he heard her say earnestly, "And you will promise me in turn to be ever faithful to him; watch over and protect him; guard his life as your very own or mine. Be his eye to recognize danger and his right arm and shield to ward it off. Then shall you win and receive my best esteem and regard."

As for Tonti, his manner betrayed no thought of love or any deeper attachment than that of friend and protector. It was as though it had been given him to bask in the clear fresh light of day for a period before his banishment into eternal night. He loved to hear the music of her voice and the ringing sweetness of her laugh, and sometimes when at the helm and she came and sat down beside him, silently drinking in the invigorating air, it seemed to him as though they were voyaging in some other world, a world of light and sunshine, an existence whose peace and contentment surpassed that of human dreams. Forgotten was the past of toil and disorder, while the kingdoms of the earth had vanished with their sound of war and conflict. He put from his mind all thought of the future, of the inevitable separation brought nearer by the passing of every league of their watery course. Content he was to live in the golden present and enjoy each transient moment.

The past two years had worked a great change

in Tonti. He was no longer the gay soldier of fortune, seeking in the battlefield the means of livelihood and material advancement, unsettled in purpose, selling the service of his sword for a sum of gold and a promotion, realizing that his life was probably a short, and hence preferably, a merry one. The harsh struggle with the rugged forces of nature, the primeval freshness of a new country, the close companionship through many dangers with a soul such as La Salle's, untarnished with the commoner littlenesses of the mankind he had hitherto known, and vibrating with the devotion of a noble life to a high purpose, the association day by day with Renée, whose being unconsciously revealed its manifold complexity and beauty to his wondering eyes, — all had served to bring about an inner metamorphosis that he knew not of, one that if he had studied himself carefully he would not have been able to analyze. Its only revelation was in the change of thought and purpose of which he was dimly conscious. The coarse and gross qualities of the camp, the blighting contaminations of the court, all that tended to the rearing of standards unworthy of the best in man (that tiny kernel of the divine implanted first within their hearts, the stifling or cherishing of which constitutes the sum of human responsibility) had slipped from him as an old garment. New yearnings, new ends, new

ideals, had arisen to take the place of the old. He realized that a field of glorious opportunity was his ; that his would be the task of winning a new land, fairer, richer than the old ; a task whose far-reaching consequences for good or ill were immeasurable. On the proper, loyal, high-minded achievement of his labor might depend the future greatness of a nation. The exalted passion felt for Renée that, unknown to him, had been the main source of the great changes wrought within, hopeless as it was as to its desired procurement, did not harden him with despair. It rather spurred him on in the invincible resolve to live his life, whatever it might be, so that he might remain worthy of her esteem. This it was that helped him to resist the temptation to be disloyal ; to thrust from his thirsty lips the draught he could not taste without dishonor.

At length the propitious winds that carried them along so peacefully brought their little craft within sight of the distant promontory of St. Ignace of Michilimackinac. Here they disembarked and found a hearty welcome. The smallpox epidemic had subsided, but there were numerous sick and wretched ones among the Indians for Renée and her companion to assist in tending.

The day after their arrival Tonti busied himself in making certain arrangements for the storing

and forwarding of any furs that might be sent by him or La Salle from the country of the Illini.

While Tonti was thus engaged, an Indian boy came to him from Renée begging that he follow him to the hut of an aged dying Ottawa. Tonti soon entered the squalid lodge and found there a priest, Renée, and one of the nuns.

"I have sent for you," whispered Renée, "because the sick man has called incessantly, ever since he was told of your arrival, for the French Captain, saying that he had a message for you."

Tonti approached the heap of skins that served for the sufferer's bed. He lay in a stupor, occasionally arousing himself so far as to utter a moan or mutter a few inarticulate words. The sound of Tonti's voice seemed to recall him to consciousness, for he grasped his hand and spoke in a weak yet clear tone.

"The French brother and the Black Gowns have been my friends. I will tell the French Captain what I see." Then closing his eyes, he was silent a moment before continuing. "I see the broad fields of the Illini. I hear the sound of the braves returning from the hunt, the shouts of the camp and the feast. I look to the rising sun and see a cloud. It grows nearer and larger. It takes the form of a bear, a beaver, and a hawk. It passes over the earth and there is nothing left.

The maize stalks are torn and withered. The lodges are burned; a thousand scalps are drying in the air. The village is no more. I see four Frenchmen. One is the friend of the great Onontio. Another is a Black Gown. They flee before the cloud. They wander alone; they are in need of food. They cry for help, but there is none, and the cloud has swept all away. I see — I see —" but the hand relaxed its grasp, the voice sank low and ceased, a convulsive catching of the breath, and the message was delivered; the messenger had gone.

Renée quickly followed Tonti to the outer air. "What can this mean?" she asked anxiously, as she saw a look of perplexity and disquietude upon his face.

"I know not, but I fear much," was the reply. "The bear, the badger, and the hawk are three of the most powerful clans of the Iroquois. It may be that they are invading the Illini or have already done so. In either case I must hasten on my way. Perhaps my arrival may save some impending disaster to La Salle. But after all, it may be nothing but the dying delirium of an ignorant savage. Come, Mademoiselle, do not be alarmed, I shall reach there in time, never fear," and he looked reassuringly into Renée's troubled face.

She was strangely agitated. "Ah, *mon ami*,"

she cried, "do not go until you learn some news of what has happened. La Salle may be dead and you will but arrive to fall a victim too. Send out your scouts that they may report to you what they learn. They can bear succor if such is needed as well as you. Or if you will go," she continued pleadingly, "take me also. Let us all go together. Is it not my duty to be where there may be wounds to heal and sickness to relieve? What would become of me were the Sieur de la Salle to be lost and you meet your death in a vain task of rescuing him?"

A great wave of feeling passed over Tonti. He struggled hard to retain his footing. Why should he not tell her now how much it meant to him that she should not expose herself to further danger, but wait for his return? Tell her all the full story of his love, promising that if he found La Salle to be lost he would quickly return and claim her for his own? If the lower country were all ablaze with savage warfare he could hardly hope with his small band to avail aught in defence or rescue; annihilation for them all would be certain. Why could he not snatch a few moments of joy before plunging into the whirlpool of danger and woe before him? But as he strove against himself the words of the dying Indian rang clear upon his ear again, "They cry for help, but there is none." His comrade, still

confiding in his faithfulness, turned to him with a cry; even in his last extremity, not knowing where his lieutenant might be, he sought his aid. Should he fail him now?

Renée watched the struggle through tear-dimmed eyes and saw the victory won. Seizing her hand, he said hurriedly:

"You know not what you ask, Mademoiselle. You would be the first to despise me were I to yield;" and hastily raising her hand to his lips, he strode rapidly away. Renée kissed the spot where his lips had been, and, sinking to the ground, burst into tears of mingled despair and joy.

The next day when his little canoe passed through the straits, a lone figure waved adieu from the edge of the highest cliff back of the settlement, and when the tiny speck had disappeared from view repaired to the chapel, there to pray for the safety of one about to encounter great peril.

Tonti reached Fort Miami at the mouth of the river in safety and there found his men who had preceded him in a larger vessel. They were all well and had made a good-sized fleet of canoes, but were much disturbed at rumors they had heard that, during the early summer, the Iroquois had made a grand invasion of the country of the Illini and had driven them from their homes, murdering and scattering the tribes. Tonti, with this corroboration of the Indian's vision, was still

more alarmed for the safety of his friend, and pushed on with all speed. They found plenty of deer and buffalo, and were thus enabled to lay in a bountiful supply of meat. As they drew near the great town of the Illini their fears were confirmed. Instead of the noise of a great encampment they found silence. The meadow below the high rock was one scene of devastation and ruin. The charred remains of the lodges were all of human habitation that remained standing. Bones and skulls were strewn about in great abundance. The Indian graves elevated on four poles had been broken down and their contents scattered. A horde of wolves fled from the ghastly repast at their approach, while a crowd of buzzards wheeled above their heads with angry cries at being thus disturbed.

The rumors were indeed true. While making an attack on the eastern white settlements another portion of the ferocious Iroquois confederacy had gone westward to annihilate their red enemies. No signs of human life were there left to tell of the disaster that had befallen. Tonti hastened with his men on down to the widening in the river near which Fort Crève-cœur had been erected. This too was a ruin, although destroyed by other hands than the Iroquois. The uncompleted vessel still stood on the stocks, on whose side was scrawled, "*Nous sommes tous sauvages.*"

This told the story of further treachery and desertion on the part of La Salle's followers. Leaving the most of his party at this spot, Tonti continued his journey with Pompon and a canoe full of picked men. They descended the river until they reached the Mississippi, but no traces of La Salle were to be found. As they progressed they could discern the spot where the retreating Illini had camped on one side of the stream, while on the opposite side their foes had kept a sharp watch over their retreat. Returning again, they rested with their entire force at the site of Fort Crève-cœur. The autumn was rapidly passing, so they finally determined to go back to Fort Miami and take up winter quarters, sending out search parties in all directions to try and discover any trace of La Salle and the remnant of his men.

# Chapter Twenty-Four

## SHOWS THAT THE LIFE OF AN EXPLORER IS FAR FROM TAME

AFTER Tonti's departure for Quebec, La Salle had proceeded to occupy his force as best he might until his return. The building of a vessel progressed but slowly, owing to continual dissatisfaction and unrest among his men. Thinking to find a work that would engage all their strength and time, he set out with one of the more trustworthy, the young Sieur de Boisrondet, together with two Récollet friars, Father Membré and Father Ribourde, and ascended the river to the spot where lay the great city of the Illini. He had long felt that if the height overlooking this town could be fortified and held, an impregnable fortress would be secured which would serve not only as a menace to all the Indians of the region, but would become an admirable storehouse for the furs that could be collected. While thus engaged at the town of the friendly Illini, one of the men who had been left behind at Fort Crève-Cœur arrived, bringing the disastrous news that the entire force

remaining there had mutinied, destroyed the fort, and taken to the woods to lead the free roving life of the *coureurs-de-bois* that they all so much desired. Thus were these three Frenchmen and the two priests left alone. They made their quarters in the Illini town. There was now no hope of fortifying the rock even, until Tonti's return.

Thus passed the spring. With the early summer came the news that carried dismay to the hearts of all their savage allies; the ferocious Iroquois were on the march to attack them. Confusion reigned. The white men were instantly accused of being Iroquois spies, and the approaching attack was attributed to their doings. For a time it looked to all as though in the heat and excitement of the moment they would be sacrificed to the fear and anger of the frightened savages. But La Salle boldly proclaimed that the whites were friends of the Illini, and to prove this said they would join them in their defence against the oncoming enemy. This served to stop any active measures against the French, although they were still viewed with suspicion.

A few days later the advance guard of the attacking force appeared, and hurried preparations were made to resist. The squaws and children were hurried down the river to an island, where they were left with a small force to guard them,

while the main body of the warriors remained to meet their foe. The faces of the braves were greased, their bodies painted, and the night spent in dancing their war-dances, singing their war-songs, and working up their courage to meet the coming battle. The scouts brought in ever-increasing reports of the size of the force that was making ready to fall upon them. La Salle offered to mediate between the two nations, so advancing with two of his companions, he held out a belt of wampum as a sign of peace. When the Iroquois commenced firing on them La Salle sent the others back, and, proceeding alone, soon entered the Iroquois lines. He inquired haughtily what they, the allies of the French, meant by coming on a warlike errand against the Illini, who were the children of the great Onontio and who were under his special protection. He stood unflinching amid a group of howling, threatening savages. One brave, intoxicated with dreams of blood and murder, struck at him with a knife, but the blade that was intended for his heart, striking a rib, glanced off, inflicting an ugly flesh wound. Another seized his hair with one hand, and with the other made the motions of scalping him. La Salle, without weapons or any means of defence, boldly chided them for their behavior, and demanded a council of the chiefs. This was held, and he repeated his demands that the Illini be

left in peace, threatening the Iroquois with the wrath of France if they were harmed.

After a long and tedious season of harangues from many of the chiefs they brought forth six packages of beaver skins and placed them before La Salle. The chief orator then presented them to him and explained their meaning. The first two were to declare that the children of the great Onontio (the Illini) were not to be eaten. The next was a plaster to heal La Salle's wound. The next was oil to anoint himself and his French companions for a long journey. The next announced that the sun was bright and travelling good. The last required that the whites should withdraw from the Illini camp, and go home to Quebec. La Salle thereupon thanked them for their gifts, but asked when they themselves were going to depart, and leave the Illini in peace. This raised a storm of angry feelings, and murmurs were heard on all sides that they would yet eat the flesh of the Illini. La Salle then kicked over the pile of beaver skins, saying that he would not receive them if they were going to eat the children of the great Onontio.

He was thereupon driven from the lodge in which the council was held. He offered again to mediate, without success. He then withdrew, sent for the rest of his party, and knowing that to remain would mean a certain and terrible death

for them all, set out in a leaky canoe for Fort Miami. They were obliged to land and repair the leaks. While thus engaged, Father Ribourde wandered away from their camp to meditate at the setting of the sun. He was never seen again by the eyes of the French. A number of Iroquois who had followed the course of the party since leaving, surprised him while engaged with his devotions in the timber near by, and cleft his skull with an axe, killing him without sound or struggle on his part. Thus died the only heir to a wealthy Burgundian house, who had renounced the comforts of this world to carry to heathen ears the truths and consolations of the Church. Noble martyr of the Faith, true soldier of the Cross, he braved a thousand dangers, fired by a holy zeal, meeting his death at the hands of those he had come so far to bless. Of such great souls can the Church of Rome be indeed proud; the lustre of such names cannot be dimmed by the passage of the centuries.

After searching vainly to find any trace of their companion and spending two days in the vicinity in the vain hope that he would return, they at last renewed their journey, reaching Fort Miami without further accident. They determined then to go up the west side of the lake toward Michilimackinac. They had not proceeded far when their canoe was rendered unfit for further service,

and they proceeded the rest of the way on foot. Food became exhausted, and they were verging upon starvation when a band of friendly Pottawottomies found them and took them to their home. Here a messenger whom Tonti had dispatched to search for tidings of his friend found them in the middle of the winter.

La Salle had finally succumbed to the vicissitudes of the past months and lay for many weeks ill with a wasting fever, tended by the faithful Boisrondet and Father Membré. He sent the messenger back to Tonti, assuring him of his safety, and begging him to remain where he was until the spring, promising to rejoin him there as soon as he was able to make the journey. Tonti sent word over the ice to Michilimackinac telling Renée of his discovery of La Salle and of their plans.

With the coming of the March rains La Salle and his little band arrived. The meeting of the two comrades long separated was full of gladness. La Salle had entirely recovered his strength and was filled with his old-time enthusiasm. The whole party now made their way with the supplies, tools, ammunition, etc., that Tonti had brought with him from Quebec, down the river to the spot where the Illini town had formerly stood. La Salle decided that he would try to gather up the remnants of the dispersed nation,

and found a new town protected by the citadel he had long contemplated erecting on the tall rock. He found on their arrival that a number of the Illini had straggled back to their old home, and he was welcomed by them as a friend and deliverer. They entered heartily into his plans, placing themselves willingly under his leadership and protection, and sent emissaries out to recall the scattered tribes. They joined in with a right good-will to assist the French in the building of the fort that was to be a future protection against the incursions of their enemies.

This cliff stood by the river's edge like a castle tower. On three sides it arose steep and sheer. Its height was about a hundred and twenty-five feet, while the top was about an acre in extent. In front it overhung the river; toward the west a forest lay at its feet; eastward a wide gorge protected it from approach in that direction. It was accessible only from behind, and that with difficulty by a narrow, steep passage hidden at the base amidst a waste of oak and walnut trees. The forest that crowned it was quickly cut down and its timbers used in erecting a palisade that ran around its edge. On the space thus cleared were erected a chapel, storehouses, a powder magazine, and various buildings to be used as dwellings by those who would flee to it for protection in time of war.

During this work the bands of the defeated Illini came straggling in, until their number amounted to six thousand. Their lodges were built about the foot of the cliff. From the vicinity of Fort Miami came a band of twenty-five exiled savages from the eastern tribes, chiefly Abenakis and Mohegans, to join their slender force to that of the colony of La Salle. Soon the news spread, and from the distant banks of the Ohio came a body of Shawanoes to incorporate themselves with this new confederation, while the Miamis from the banks of the Theakiki, realizing the importance of joining with the others against their common enemy the Iroquois, offered themselves to swell the numbers. La Salle gladly accepted these numerous additions, and soon the country for a mile around the rock was dotted with the lodges of the allies. The total number at length amounted to over twenty thousand souls, of whom fully four thousand were warriors.

Finally the fort was finished, and the flag that Renée had given to La Salle floated from the summit. The name of Fort St. Louis was given to the fortification, and thus after many defeats it seemed as though some lasting progress had been made toward winning the great West for the French King.

Tonti had recounted faithfully all the adven-

tures of his journey to La Salle and had received warm praise for all that had been accomplished. He described his meeting with Renée at Quebec, the reason assigned by Frontenac for her leaving France, his endeavors for her safety, which he knew was precious in the eyes of his friend, and all the course of their wanderings. La Salle was surprised at learning of her close proximity, but to Tonti's amazement expressed no intention of either going for her himself, or of sending to Michilimackinac to bring her to him. In fact, although he saw a faint flicker of the former light in his eye when he first mentioned her, yet he seemed to show far greater concern over learning the condition of affairs at Quebec than he did to hear the details of their voyage. Tonti attributed this seeming indifference to an attempt upon the part of his comrade to conceal his real feelings, as was his wont whenever anything touched him deeply.

La Salle realized that in order to maintain the advantage already gained and keep in hand the various tribes beneath his control, two things must be accomplished: one, that of making the fort impregnable so that the trust of the savages that he could protect them from the Iroquois would not be lost; the other, that of supplying them with French goods in exchange for their furs. To meet the first conditions more men,

ammunition, guns, and cannon must be brought from Quebec. To meet the second a trip to that city must be made in person to make the best arrangements possible with his creditors and to provide for the importation of the various goods the Indians demanded. Thus it was that the christening of the fort had hardly been accomplished before the ever-restless spirit of the man urged him to action. He therefore made his plans for leaving the fort in charge of Tonti and making the journey eastward with all possible speed. One thing more, however, was essential. This was that he should be able to report the exploration of the lower Mississippi and take possession of all that vast territory in the name of the King. This must necessarily be accomplished first, so he made ready for the voyage southward. Choosing a sufficient number of men for the expedition, he departed, promising the savages that he would return and instructing them to yield full obedience to Tonti in his absence. The building of the fort having been accomplished with great rapidity, he hoped to be able to make the voyage to the Gulf and back in time to reach Quebec before the ships made their autumn voyage to France, so that they would bear the news of his discoveries to the King.

Accordingly, he paddled away one bright May

morning and began the difficult journey that he had long wished to make.

Down the sluggish bosom of the Illini they passed into the broad expanse of the Mississippi. Soon the mouth of the Ohio was seen and the heat of summer became more and more intense. Here and there they met with bands of savages living on the banks of the mighty river. These were approached with the calumet, the sign of peace, and the white travellers were entertained with feasts and dances, while presents and promises were interchanged. La Salle harangued the listeners, assuring them of the great King's friendship and power, and claiming all the territory through which he passed for his sovereign.

Soon the great stream writhed in sinuous course, many marshes were passed, and the sultry heat of an almost tropical sun rendered the work of paddling very fatiguing. They stopped to rest at one place and visited at a short distance inland the great town of the Taensas. Here Father Membré was shocked to find a temple of the sun, with a sacred fire kept constantly alight. The chief admitted them to his temple as well as his lodge, and eternal friendship with the French was sworn. Thus over many a weary league of tortuous water-course did they pass until the ever-widening river told them of the approach of their journey's end. The chan-

nel divided into three, and taking the middle one, they soon found before their wearied eyes the dancing waters of the Gulf.

Here they landed, and a column was erected bearing the arms of France, on which was inscribed:

"LOUIS LE GRAND, ROY DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE, RÉGNE."

A *Te Deum* was chanted, and amid the shouts of savage voices, the cries of "*Vive le Roi!*" from the French, and the firing of guns, La Salle took possession of all the country drained by the great Mississippi and its tributaries under the name of Louisiana, for the French King and his successors. Thus on a summer day did that vast expanse from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, from the unknown country far northward of the Great Lakes to the Gulf, pass to the crown of him who, thousands of leagues away, was engaged in wasting the revenues of a great nation on the fripperies of a corrupt court and the transient glories of Versailles.

# Chapter Twenty-Five

## IN WHICH POMPON BRINGS HARMONY OUT OF DISCORD

DURING La Salle's absence Tonti worked hard to further the welfare of the colony. His first effort was to do away with all possible discord that might arise between the various nations comprising the new settlement. To this end he summoned the various chiefs and spent many hours haranguing them as to the benefit to be derived from putting aside all tribal feeling and joining with him in his efforts for the common good. The convincing nature of his arguments, together with the presents distributed, brought about the desired effect. A Grand Council was formed in which each tribe received recognition according to its size. Simple general regulations governing the community were drawn up and assented to. A uniform price for all skins brought to the French was established. The final settlement of all disputes was left in the hands of La Salle or his representative. The limits of the land apportioned out for cultivation were definitely marked. The space

around the base of the fort was all cleared; the final touches to the buildings on top of the rock were completed.

These things having been accomplished, Tonti waited anxiously for the return of La Salle. As the summer began to wane a strange disease broke out among the Indians that did not affect the whites, but which spread with great rapidity. With it came the first murmurs of discontent. Some of the medicine-men after holding a feast determined that the scourge had been sent because of their extreme friendliness with the French. Tonti realized the danger, and determined that the best way to combat this new difficulty was to fight the disease. He accordingly instituted measures looking toward greater cleanliness of the Indian lodges and did what he could to alleviate the sufferings of those already ill. At this juncture he received a letter from the commandant of the fort at Michilimackinac, who had always been friendly to La Salle and his projects. In this he said that the return of many bands of *coureurs-de-bois* had rendered the position of Renée a very trying one, as her beauty attracted much unwelcome attention and suggested that she be sent, together with two of the nuns, to Fort St. Louis.

Tonti, although knowing that her advent would mean further trials for himself, gladly consented,

realizing the need he had just then for nurses, and expecting the return of La Salle shortly, believed it would be agreeable to him to find her there. He accordingly dispatched Pompon with two canoes to bring the party to the fort. He awaited their arrival with impatience. The months that had elapsed since parting with Renée had been months of activity that prevented him from feeling the full hopelessness and regret of his situation. But even amidst his busiest moments would come the thought of her stealing upon him ere he was aware, and he would find himself wondering as to her safety and happiness. He timed the rate of Pompon's journey carefully.

The day dawned on which, if no delay had occurred, they ought to reach their journey's end. Never before had the sun shone so brightly upon the silken folds of the lily banner of France on the staff of the fort. Never before had the sound of birds calling to their mates seemed quite so clear and musical, nor the sight of the awakened happy life at his feet quickened his pulse with so much satisfaction as he realized what had already been accomplished. He fell to wondering if she would approve of everything that he had done and half wished that he had but a few days more in which to do a hundred little things that would make still further for the success of

the undertaking. He visited for the twentieth time the commodious lodge within the walls of the fort that had been set aside for the occupation of the women, to see if the place were in good order. He had prepared soft couches for them, formed of layers of mingled leaves and pine needles covered over with a number of furs. The table and chairs, the sawing and making of which he had supervised, were in their places, while the walls were festooned with bunches of wild flowers the Indian children had gathered at his instigation. His final survey saw that everything was ready; it was indeed a fit bower for a forest queen.

About noon from his lofty station he caught sight of two tiny specks far away up the river, and he knew that they were coming. Entering his canoe, he seized his paddle and set out to meet them. His heart was light as he heard the music of the water beneath his prow. He had been able to rescue her again from a position of discomfort and peril; perhaps other opportunities for serving her would arise. He hoped they would, for her service was his delight. He sang as he sped along; sang half-forgotten songs of deeds of war and glory, of fair women and gallant lovers. But he realized that he, alas, could not speak the words that were ready to fall from his lips, words of love, of tenderness, and of devotion

that must not be uttered. He schooled his tongue to keep silence, but he knew he could not control his heart, which would beat to the tune of love's own music despite himself.

All animate nature seemed to rejoice with him. The glad screaming of the wild fowl winging their way along the marshy edges of the stream, the cries of quail in the underbrush far away, even the hoarse cawing of the crows from their perches on the blasted limbs of the forest came to his ear in tones of sympathetic gladness. The whole world seemed in gala attire as though to welcome a loved monarch returning to his kingdom.

Soon they drew near, and he saw the flash of Pompon's signalling paddle in the air. He came alongside the canoe containing Renée, and perceived with thankfulness the glow of health on her cheek and the glad welcome of her eye that the words of commonplace greetings exchanged between the two could not express. They soon landed, and the nuns with their fair companion were quickly established in their new house. They set to work at once among the sick, and soon the effect of their presence was felt. The disease died out without further ravages, and again were the French hailed as the deliverers of their allies. The cooling hand and gentle ministrations of these angels of mercy procured for the two priests who came with them a respectful

hearing, and soon quite a goodly number of the savages began regular attendance at mass. Renée's quiet dignity and queenly beauty won from the redmen their respect and admiration as for some supernatural creature, which soon developed into a devotion unheard of before among them.

During the epidemic Renée had been so busily engaged that Tonti scarce had caught a glimpse of her. Now that her duties were lightened they often met, and standing together by the wooden ramparts of the fort, looked out across the river or down upon the town beneath them teeming with human life and activity. Tonti made no reference to their personal relations, but spoke of La Salle's return, his plans and the future prospects of the colony. Renée listened to him with interest, but the look of peace which she wore betrayed the fact that she was content with the present and satisfied at being there.

One morning a canoe was sighted coming up the river. On landing it was found to contain three members of La Salle's party, sent to reinforce the garrison of the fort, who bore a message from him to Tonti. In this La Salle related what he had accomplished, and informed Tonti that he had chosen to save time by journeying up the Ohio River on his way to Quebec instead of returning to Fort St. Louis and thence by way

of the lakes, as he had originally intended. He appointed Tonti to command in his absence and sent messages of good-will to the Indian chiefs. He hoped to return by December and wished them all success in defending and holding the post. Tonti received the news of the further duration of his responsibility with a good grace, while Renée's features expressed no sorrow.

This state of peaceful happiness was not to last, however. Within two weeks another canoe appeared bringing a French officer from Quebec. He presented himself to Tonti as the Chevalier de Baugis, an officer of the King's dragoons, who bore an unwelcome letter for La Salle. Through this letter Tonti learned, much to his surprise, that Frontenac's enemies had so far prevailed as to procure his recall the previous autumn; that Le Febvre de la Barre was now Governor, a friend of Duchesneau and the other enemies of La Salle. He brought with him a commission as commanding officer of His Majesty's Fort, and orders for La Salle to surrender the command to him and report at once at Quebec. This was a severe blow. Tonti was not disposed to submit to his deposition gracefully.

"Monsieur le Chevalier de Baugis," he said, as he handed back the commission, "the Sieur de la Salle is already on his way to Quebec in ignorance of the events that have taken place there. He is

therefore not here to receive the commands of the new Governor. My authority is received from Sieur de la Salle, and to him alone am I answerable for the safety of this fortress. He will undoubtedly forward his wishes to me at the earliest opportunity. Until I receive word from him I cannot resign my command to any one. I can but regard you as an officer of the King, whose presence may be of assistance, and my guest."

The Chevalier was greatly angered at this unexpected resistance, but Tonti remained firm, and left him after showing him the lodge that was accorded to him as his residence. The next day, although his anger had vanished, he displayed a surly demeanor. He received Tonti's courtesies ungraciously and spent his time in writing out a lengthy complaint of the insubordination of the commander he found in charge, which he purposed sending to Quebec at the earliest opportunity. As no messenger was directly available, he contented himself with viewing the work already accomplished with a condescending air, that expressed his contempt of everything. His ideas were those gained from experience in civilized warfare. The necessities of campaigns carried on against a savage foe he knew nothing about.

The Indians did not take kindly to the new representative of the great King and viewed his contemptuous attitude with much disfavor. The

men under Tonti had learned to have a great enthusiasm for their commander, and when they were informed of the newcomer's errand murmurs of dissatisfaction were heard mingled with muttered threats of mutiny in case he took command. Tonti quieted these outbreaks as well as he could and endeavored to treat him with the attention due his position as his guest. He took pains to walk about the fort pointing out the reasons for the various devices used in the fortifying of the place, and explaining, in a measure, the plans made by La Salle for the maintenance and improvement of the colony. They were thus engaged one morning when Renée passed near them on her return from the town below. The Chevalier followed her with admiring gaze.

"*Sacré!*" he exclaimed to Tonti, pulling hard on his moustache. "What a beautiful *donnée!* Whence comes she? It is a pity for one so lovely to waste her life going about in such a garb."

"She is one sent out by the nuns at Quebec," said Tonti coldly. "She is devoted to her work and has proved of invaluable assistance to us in tending the sick."

"*Ma foi!*" continued his companion, "I should not mind being ill with such a nurse."

Pompon took a violent dislike to the man from the first and kept his eye on him at all times. One day he came to Tonti with a troubled face,

and reported that he had twice that day seen the Chevalier attempt to speak to Renée when he met her. That the second time she had been forced to run into her lodge to escape his attention. Tonti was greatly enraged, but sought out Renée and asked her in regard to the encounter. She, not wishing to be the cause of increasing the perplexities of the situation, made light of the matter and begged him not to make any move in the affair, as the Chevalier was not likely to repeat the discourtesy. Tonti yielded a reluctant consent, but resolved upon a sharp line of action in case the offence occurred again. Pompon, realizing the position of Tonti, determined to act for himself if need be. He took the young Sieur de Boisrondet into his confidence, who was the devoted friend of Tonti and who worshipped the fair Renée from a distance. These two zealous allies watched carefully for several days without discovering any cause for interfering. At length the sharp eye of Pompon caught sight of the figure of the Chevalier lounging near Renée's lodge in such a spot that she would have to pass near him on her return. Soon she appeared, and the young officer with a sweeping bow sought to engage her in conversation, but she pushed hurriedly by without looking at him. He strove to detain her by touching her arm. She uttered a slight cry of alarm and fled.

That night the Chevalier was sitting in his lodge, which was lighted by a pine knot. His scanty writing material lay on the table before him. The composition he was making evidently was an effort, for he stopped, scowled, and bit his quill at every few words. "A louis d'or for a rhyme to '*donnée*,'" he muttered. A knock aroused him and the Sieur de Boisrondet entered.

"Pardon my intrusion, Chevalier," he began hurriedly but determinedly, "but I have a word of warning for you."

Baugis looked up in surprise. "What warning can one of the men whose commander I shall shortly be give to me?" he asked haughtily.

"'T is this," resumed De Boisrondet quietly; "you have come here and are suffered to remain as the guest of our commander, the only commander we recognize, M. le Capitaine Tonti. You have publicly behaved in a manner discourteous to him. His men, his Indian allies, are devoted to him. If they should become incensed I could not answer for their conduct."

"Has your precious leader sent you here with this threat?" was the sneering inquiry. "Why does he not come in person? I shall not hurt him."

"He knows nothing about my errand," was the quiet reply. "There is another matter I would speak of also."

"*Ma foi!* more offences! Go on; I suppose I am a schoolboy and must be reprimanded."

"You have been seen endeavoring to force distasteful attentions upon the young *donnée*."

"*Parbleu!*" broke in Baugis angrily. "Am I to be held accountable for my every act in this wilderness? What if I choose to speak to a pretty face? Who but the priests are there who will rebuke me?"

"Another such action and you will have to deal with Capitaine Tonti. I warn you it will not seem a small matter in his eyes."

"So, *mon Dieu!* this mighty Capitaine of yours will interfere, will he? Pray tell me by what right he assumes to be my censor? Is he her brother? or husband? or —"

The speaker did not finish; the smirk upon his face suddenly faded away. During the conversation a small figure climbed noiselessly in through the window behind him. As he was speaking he suddenly felt the cold impress of a gun muzzle placed against the back of his neck and he heard a voice that chilled him with the grim determination in its tone. "Finish that sentence or make a single move and I shall blow your body to the four corners of the room and your soul to hell. Take up your pen and write. Say that you agree to behave with all due respect to your host, that you will cease forever all

attempts to communicate with the *donnée* or to annoy her in any way, and that you will bear no malice to either of them nor towards the two of us present now."

The man, although brave, could not repress a shudder at his predicament, and after a moment's hesitation wrote as commanded and signed his name with a flourish. "Hand it to me over your shoulder," continued the voice. When he did so the weapon was removed and he turned quickly about to see the form of Pompon standing behind his chair.

Before a word could be said by any one a knock was heard at the door and Tonti entered. "I was just making my rounds for the night, Chevalier, and I stopped to see if—" here his eyes fell upon Baugis' companions and he paused in wonderment.

"I have been receiving some of your friends and have been entertained by their conversation," the officer began blandly. "They have doubtless come from you, as their errand was in your interest. They have procured a little writing from me by means which, though unpleasant, have been effectual."

Tonti, still more astonished, seeing the paper in the hands of Pompon, took it and read the contents. He flushed, and, raising his eyes to Baugis, said earnestly:

"I trust, Chevalier, that you do not believe me to be a party to this proceeding. My misguided friends have taken far different measures than I should have done. But since the matter has been under discussion I will say that my desire as to the young *donnée* is that you carry out the spirit of what you have written here. But to show you that I put the matter on an entirely different footing, behold, I release you from your word;" and thrusting the paper into the flame, he allowed it to burn. "I will exact no promise, but will say simply this: The *donnée* is a young woman of quality; as a gentleman of France you may realize that any further attempts at annoyance or attention will give the lie to your claim of gentility. If these feelings do not influence you, know well that I am pledged to guard her person from danger and her mind from unhappiness. Should you persist further, I doubt not but two swords can be found about the fort that will determine the matter between us. I have no fear as to the result; you were in Paris at the time I vanquished the Comte de Miron. I do not believe you to be a better swordsman than he."

The Chevalier stared in astonishment at this speech. He muttered at the close, "*Parbleu!* I recollect. You killed the Comte de Miron!" Then suddenly his face changed. The flush of

anger died away, and, rising slowly, he approached Tonti.

"Capitaine Tonti, you have shown me my fault," he said humbly. "I have a thousand pardons to beg of you for my conduct since my arrival. Your attitude in everything has been commendable. Your last alternative has no force with me. A brave foe demands one's admiration. That you are brave I well know. A generous enemy commands one's respect. That you are generous you have shown by the destruction of my written promise. Let us be rivals no longer; may we not be friends?" And with an engaging smile the young man thrust forth his hand impulsively. His voice rang true, and Tonti grasped the proffered evidence of good-will.

"Let us rule here conjointly," continued Baugis, "you as the representative of La Salle and the active commander; I as the representative of the King, commander only in name, for I find I have much to learn before I can take over the full responsibility. And as for your faithful friends," turning to Pompon and Boisrondet, "their zeal in their superior's cause is worthy of my thanks. God grant I find such faithful ones always around me."

Tonti was about to reply when a sound of shouting was heard in the yard of the fort and he heard his name called. Soon the sound of run-

ning steps was heard shuffling over the hard ground, the voices came nearer, the door burst open, and the figure of a young chief darted into the room. Blood streamed down his breast from a fearful wound, while a gash across his head showed that he had been scalped. He stopped before Tonti an instant. "The Iroquois!" he cried. Having delivered his message, he swayed, fell to the floor, and after one convulsive shudder lay still.

# Chapter Twenty-Six

CONTAINS AN ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK ON THE FORT, AND HOW POMPON REDEEMED HIS PLEDGE

THE news brought by the wounded Indian was indeed true. The crafty Iroquois, learning of the efforts of La Salle to centralize the French and Indian power of the West in one large settlement, defended by a stronghold that would be impregnable to future attacks, had resolved on striking one quick decisive blow before the colony had become thoroughly established. By rapid, secret marches they had advanced to a point within a dozen leagues of the river, and there had awaited a suitable moment for attack. One of their number, an Illini youth, made prisoner in their previous raid and adopted by his captors, was sent as a spy to mingle with his former clansmen. He had reported to them the absence of a considerable force on a hunting expedition to the westward ; the rivalry and ill-feeling between Tonti and the Chevalier, and the sense of security that seemed to fill the minds of all the allies. They determined upon an im-

mediate advance, after sending their spy back to mingle again with the unsuspecting victims, and render what assistance he could at the assault upon the fort which would have to be taken. A young Miami, wandering to the east on the trail of a bear, had been suddenly surrounded, scalped, and left for dead. He had revived, and managed, despite his wounds, to reach the fort ahead of the approaching enemy.

Tonti immediately sounded the alarm. The fort was manned by all the soldiers and a few Indians, among whom was the Iroquois spy; messengers were sent to recall the hunting party; the women and children were all taken to an island near the further side of the river. A barricade was hastily erected some quarter of a mile from the fort; scouts were dispatched to learn the position of the enemy. Thus the remainder of the night was spent. The light of the burning lodges of those tribes situated farthest from the fort was seen, indicating that the Iroquois were advancing. Day dawned, and the scouts returning announced that the enemy were about two thousand strong, and lay in ambush less than a mile away. They reported that the expedition seemed to be led by a white chief called "Le Loup." Tonti and Pompon exchanged glances on hearing this. "*Ma foi! mon ami*," said the first, "shall we not give my former host a warm welcome?"

"As hot as fire can make it," exclaimed Pompon.

"Nay, nay," replied Tonti, "not so fierce. Although he has turned savage, we have not. If he can only be captured, I shall take great pleasure in forcing a sword into his hands and giving him two seconds in which to place himself *en garde*."

"Two seconds too long," muttered Pompon, between his teeth. "If I ever get hold of him I can promise you I shall never let go until one or both of us are dead."

Work on the barricade, which was semi-circular in shape, went rapidly on during the day. Tonti had expected to take command of this portion of his force himself, but the Chevalier interposed, "Pray give me the post, as a token of our reconciliation, and to afford me an opportunity of proving my qualities as a soldier. You can best direct the whole defence from the fort; besides, I think you are needed there."

Tonti reluctantly consented. He ordered a succession of brush-heaps to be prepared between the fort and the barricade so that if the attack came at night, as it probably would, the light from them would aid the defenders. He went about among his Indian allies, assigning them positions and encouraging them. There was evident need of this latter work, for he found that the hostile

approach of the Iroquois had brought back memories of past raids, and that the old terror of the hated name had been awakened. The French soldiers, being more accustomed to fighting with long range weapons, were kept to guard the fort. The remaining whites, the priests, Renée, and the nuns were also among those on the top of the rock. They prepared quarters for the wounded, and made all ready to attend those whom the coming fight would render fit subjects for their care.

The sounds of preparation had ceased. All was in readiness. Every eye of the defenders was strained through the gathering twilight to catch sight of the first signs of attack. The sun had set in a cloudy sea of blood, a fact that was noted by the Indians with an ominous shake of the head. From across the river came the evening pipings of drowsy birds. A whip-poor-will was heard to call; a chorus of frogs added their deep bass-note to the even-song of nature. Suddenly a savage yell was heard, answered by another from the tree shade facing the barricade. In an instant the quiet scene was changed. A thousand dusky figures leaped from their hiding-places and rushed across the clearing. A thousand arms brandished gun or battle-axe. A thousand throats poured forth a volume of demoniac sound. Hell was broken loose; the battle was on.

An answering yell came from behind the barri-

cade, whose red-skinned defenders danced up and down working themselves into a frenzy to meet the coming hand-to-hand conflict. The Chevalier had given orders to the front row of his force, who were armed with guns, not to fire until the enemy had come within ten feet of them. This order was obeyed, and the invading line had almost reached the barricade before a shot was fired. The Iroquois, loath enough to attack a fortified place, were evidently surprised at the number of guns in possession of the besieged. Many of them dropped before the fire. The rest hastily retreated and stopped at the edge of the clearing, contenting themselves with yells and an occasional shot fired at random. Suddenly the report of the little cannon from the summit of the fort was heard, and a ball crashed into their midst as they stood congregated together.

Reinforced by others from the interior of the woods, they prepared for another advance. This time, instead of rushing directly in one solid line, they separated, running a few steps and then suddenly crouching down close to the ground. The barricade was finally reached, and after waiting to receive its fire, they precipitated themselves upon it before its defenders could load again. The brush-heaps were ignited, and their light served to render the foe more easily distinguishable. The Chevalier was seemingly at every spot along the

line at once, cheering his allies and ably directing the defence. At this moment, however, just as the tide seemed about to turn against the attacking force, the dreaded Iroquois yell was heard from the river at the rear of the defenders. Terror seized them, believing themselves to be surrounded by the enemy, and despite all the efforts of Baugis to rally them they fled southward along the river's edge. A score of wily Iroquois had entered the river above, and swimming noiselessly down until they were well past the fort, had landed and approached the besieged from the rear, making as much noise as possible, hoping to be able to deceive them into thinking that a large force was behind them. They succeeded admirably, and soon the entire space about the base of the fort was one mass of ferocious hostile faces.

Tonti in the meantime had directed the fire both of the cannon and the guns of his men to the best advantage. The young Indian he had posted to watch the river for any approach from that direction had reported nothing, and was nowhere to be found when the yells of the small Iroquois band proclaimed the success of their undertaking. He saw with tears of rage in his eyes the retreat of the allies under Baugis. There was no time to afford him aid, as the fort was surrounded before he could order a portion of his men to their assistance. As has been

stated, the rock was absolutely inaccessible from three sides, so the whole attention of both the attacking party and the defenders of the fort was directed towards the remaining side. The approach here was by a zigzag path, less than four feet in width, fashioned out of the rock. Up this path the savages swarmed, only to be shot down or crushed by stones let drop from the walls above. The number of Iroquois, however, was so great that no sooner did one fall than another took his place. Some, holding the body of a dead comrade upon their backs, crept, thus protected, nearer to the gateway at the top of the path.

Tonti was surprised in not seeing Miron anywhere, for he had sufficient knowledge of Indian warfare to recognize his directing hand in the mode of attack, so different from the methods usually employed by the savages. Pompon, with eye alert to catch sight of the villain's face, moved rapidly about the enclosure, finding time occasionally to run back to the lodge where the nuns and Renée were, to assure her of Tonti's safety and report the progress of the defence. He always returned, however, to Tonti's elbow, aiding him in the carrying out of their efforts to repulse the horde slowly climbing the pathway, a painful fact made evident by the glare of the blazing brush-fires.

The side of the fort towards the river being furthest from these fires was in comparative darkness. The shade was not so deep, however, as to prevent an observer, had he been present, from seeing the figure of the young Iroquois spy slip out from a place of concealment, and, mounting the platform, peer anxiously over the edge into the river below. In answer to some signal he stooped, and picking up a long object, fastened one end about the flagstaff on the platform and threw the other into the river. He waited until he heard a splash, then, mounting over the edge of the palisade, he disappeared. He had procured a strong vine rope and thus effected his escape.

He had been gone but a short time, when a sound as of some one ascending the rope could have been heard, and soon a hand touched the top and the half-naked figure of a man appeared. He cautiously gained the shadow and rapidly approached one after another of the small buildings in the enclosure, listening at each one before passing on to the next. At length he came to the one in which the nuns and Renée were anxiously awaiting the outcome of the fight. The nuns were praying, while Renée, with rosary in hand, sat beside the burning pine knot, listening for every sound. Pompon had just left her. She strove to concentrate her mind upon the beads in her hand. She looked down. A noise

at the door aroused her. Perhaps it was Pompon returning with bad news! She gave a shriek of terror. The door had opened and the Comte de Miron, in all the ferocity of his Iroquois war-paint, with a knife held between his teeth, stood before her.

The nuns on seeing this terrible apparition ran to the farthest corner. Miron approached Renée before she could overcome her terror sufficiently to move, snatched up the light, applied it to the bark wall of the lodge, which quickly ignited, seized Renée in his arms and was gone.

The battle still raged furiously for the possession of the gate. Already had the line of crawling, climbing devils almost gained the top of the path. The situation was desperate. The young Sieur de Boisrondet approached at a signal from Tonti. "Tell the men if the gate is gained and forced we must make a last stand just within the entrance. We can do nothing if these fiends once really enter the yard."

The young man saluted and then in a hesitating tone, said: "M. le Capitaine will not be offended if a subordinate were to make a suggestion? It is only our great extremity that leads me to speak."

"*Non, certainement,*" replied Tonti. "Speak up and let us know what you have in mind."

"You will remember some time ago you placed

in my care the work of excavating a new magazine in which to store our powder?"

"Yes."

"Well, as M. le Capitaine left the entire task to me, the choice of situation as well as the oversight of the excavation, —"

"Go on," cried Tonti impatiently, as the yells of the savages rose louder than before, indicating that an advance had been made.

"I thought it might be a good plan sometime to have a mine laid ready to be exploded —"

"So you —"

"I made the excavation so that it would lie just beneath the outside path some score of feet from the top."

"*Sangue di Dio!*" cried Tonti joyously, as the idea of the young man flashed into his mind. "We are saved. You mean to fire the magazine beneath their very feet, and make an opening in the path they can never cross?"

"That was my thought," replied the young man modestly, flushing with pleasure as he saw his leader approved it. "The powder has not been stored there yet, but can be in a very few moments."

"Take three men with you," ordered Tonti, "and place half of all our stock of powder in the new magazine, and arrange so that it can be exploded on a given signal."

"In twenty minutes it shall be ready," replied the youth, and hastened away to carry out the command.

"Hold out for a half-hour longer and we shall blow these devils to perdition," shouted Pompon in the ears of the line of men defending the pass. A cheer was the response. Soon the young Sieur de Boisrondet returned. "It is accomplished," he reported with a smile.

Just then a strange lull in the confused sounds of the combat occurred. It lasted but a few seconds; but during that silence there came to the ears of the men the sound of a woman's scream from the interior of the fort yard. Both Tonti and Pompon recognized the voice and turned together. The light of the burning building was seen, and they started at a rapid pace, Tonti shouting to the Sieur de Boisrondet to take command until his return. More agile than his friend, nerved to action by the fear in his heart for Renée's safety, he gained the other side of the fort first. By the light of the blazing lodge he beheld his enemy ascending the platform bearing in his arms the form of his beloved. With a cry he sprang after him. Miron heard his voice, and, having gained the top, turned to meet his foe. Tonti felt for his pistol that he had placed in his belt but found that it had dropped out in his hasty progress. Nothing

daunted, without a weapon, he rushed up the little ladder and grappled with his enemy. Miron dropped Renée to the platform and received Tonti with a smile of savage joy, brandishing his knife. Tonti struck the arm holding the weapon a furious blow with his iron hand, to force him to drop it, and seized his throat with the other.

Miron still retained his knife and Tonti by the fast increasing light saw the blade descend, and felt as it were a red-hot iron plunged into his shoulder. Again it fell, this time into his back. A blackness fell suddenly before his eyes. His hold upon the throat of his adversary loosened, a roaring filled his ears, followed by a great explosion which seemed to shake the platform on which they stood, and he fell back and knew no more.

Miron did not stop, but throwing his knife aside, stooped down and gathered Renée, who called loudly for help, within his arms again. He approached the palisade and had already made preparations for his descent when he saw Pompon appear upon the rampart. With an oath he drew back, and putting Renée down once more, made ready to receive this new attack. Neither of the men had a weapon, but each sprang at the other's throat like some ferocious animal; they clinched and struggled to and fro;

neither was able to throttle the other, so evenly was their strength matched. Renée, with streaming hair and terror-stricken eyes, dragged herself towards the motionless form of Tonti out of the way of the combatants, who swayed from side to side in their desperate efforts. Now Miron has the advantage as he strives to trip his adversary; but Pompon, quick and agile, recovers his footing, and the struggle is renewed on equal terms. Backward they rush, and Miron barely saves himself from falling from the platform into the yard of the fort by a desperate wrench. They turn and twist and turn again. The rough planks beneath their feet creak under their tread: the whole structure vibrates with the violence of the fight.

At length Pompon's strength began to fail, and he felt the grip on his throat tighten, while his own slowly relaxed. They were alone; the din of battle, the shouts of the French, and the war-cries of the Indians, reached his ears from the other side of the fort. There was no aid near. He could not maintain the struggle longer. He glanced at Renée, crouching helpless and terrified beside his wounded friend, and a look of high resolve came into his eye that made his ugly scarred countenance glow with the beauty of a noble purpose, a look his antagonist saw and dreaded. Renée met his glance and understood.

With the cry, "*Adieu, mon Capitaine!*" he forced his foe back by one supreme effort. Another step toward the outer edge is made, and a grim smile of satisfaction appears upon his face. One more — Miron's foot slipped in a pool of Tonti's blood; he strove desperately to regain his balance and failed; and the two men locked fast in a savage embrace swayed to and fro an instant, then plunged headlong over the edge of the palisade, and fell, down, down, through the blackness of the night, and disappeared beneath the dark surface of the swiftly moving stream at the foot of the cliff.

## Chapter Twenty-Seven

### THE END IS REACHED, AND TONTI COMES INTO HIS OWN

WEEK after week of suffering followed for Tonti. The desperate nature of his wounds sent the fever mounting to his brain, and he tossed wearily about, fighting against numberless foes, living over again many of the events through which he had passed during the last two years. In all his battles did the lowering sinister face of Miron appear; through all the scenes did the form of Renée flit, ever with her eyes fixed upon him, at times glad and laughing, now sad and reproachful, and again with the love-light born of a deep and noble passion shining through them. At times the figure of La Salle approached and looked reprovingly at him. Then did Tonti break forth in his own defence. "Ah! *mon ami*," he would murmur, "did you but know the task your friendship imposed; did you but realize the heavy load your confession of your love for Renée, my Renée, laid upon me, you would not hold me worthy of reproof. Could you but have seen my

struggle, daily, hourly, to trample down the love that had sprung into existence at the same time as your own, to maintain the honor of my word, to uphold that faithfulness to you that I knew was the only thing I had to offer to her memory, you would have pitied me."

Again his other friend stood beside him and he appealed to him: "*Mon cher* Pompon," he cried, "you know the temptation I was subject to. You must know, for you were with us; you heard with me the music in her voice, more delightful than the harmonies of many birds. You heard her step, lighter than the soft summer wind blowing over the Sicilian fields. You saw the warmth in her cheek, how it was ruddier than the distant glow of Vesuvius against the sky at night. You felt the grace and charm of her presence, pure as that of an angel fresh from the throne of God, sweet as the memory of childish days, when one fell asleep with the melody of a mother's voice soothing one's ears. Yes, you know it all, for you were there. You know I triumphed, but at what a cost: to have one's heart's blood squeezed out drop by drop, and yet unable to do aught but smile at each fresh pain."

At times he fancied himself ill and in great anguish. Then would the figure of Renée, robed as she had been while waiting upon the sick, come

and put to his lips a refreshing draught or lay her soothing hand upon his feverish head. At the touch a delicious feeling of coolness suffused itself throughout his frame, and peace and restfulness would come. By and by he would dream he awakened and saw Renée sitting near, with his hand resting lightly in her palm. He knew it was but a dream and did not stir lest it should vanish and be replaced by one less pleasing. Once the figure leaned over him and touched his forehead with her lips. One day as he lay still watching the dream-figure beside him, his vision cleared and he knew he was awake. He flushed lightly and withdrew his hand, and Renée realized that her patient had regained consciousness.

He soon slept, this time not to dream, but to gather strength. Thus did he sleep and waken day by day. Each awakening, thanks to the effect of the ointment Renée had found in Pompon's bag, brought a feeling of renewed vigor and a sharper bound to his pulse that sent the life stream quickening to every part. Whenever he roused himself he saw the same patient figure of her whom he loved, watching, praying beside him. She would not let him talk, but ere long admitted the Chevalier and Boisrondet. Their hearty clasp of the hand and cheering words urged on his convalescence. They told him little by little of the events of that awful night. How,

after his leaving the gate, the Indians had advanced along the path with a rush, and Boisrondet had, on his own responsibility, fired the mine, which sound had been the last his ears had heard when he sank beneath the murderous hand of Miron. How the chasm formed by this explosion had prevented any further attack upon the fort. How Baugis had finally rallied his forces, and, approaching the Iroquois from the rear, had made a strong onslaught, just as they recoiled from the exploded mine, and slaughtered many, driving some into the river and putting the rest to flight, pursuing them for eight days, until the hosts that had assailed so boldly were reduced to a few struggling bands that slunk despairingly homeward. In answer to an inquiring look they told him that Miron was dead and that Pompon had gone on a journey.

Lazily he watched his nurse as she moved about the room, half regretting his daily increasing strength that warned him of a coming time when he would no longer need her assistance and would lose the delight of having her near him. But he shrank from contemplating that event, knowing that the taking up of their separate duties once more would tax his powers to the full. Then came the days when, propped up in a chair, he sat in the doorway and enjoyed the bright October sunshine, while the Indian chiefs

and soldiers came to pay their respects to the commander they loved. One afternoon after he had been able to stand and take a few steps he was told by Renée of Pompon's end. Of the sacrifice that he had made for her and him. How the bodies of the two men had been found floating a few miles below the fort still clasped in their fierce embrace. How the Indians had stolen the body of the Comte and burned it amidst execrations and maledictions. How she had requested the Chevalier to have a grave dug for Pompon out of the rock within the enclosure of the fort, close to the scene of his death struggle.

Tonti's eyes filled with tears as he realized that his friend, having guessed his love for Renée, had given his life that she might remain to him. Together (he, pale and weak, leaning on the arm of his nurse, she patiently accommodating her healthful gait to his trembling steps) they visited the spot. Tonti ordered cut upon the cross that marked the place where his friend lay the words "Faithful unto death," and told Renée of the fateful sentence uttered by Pompon as the three drank their last toast in the little cabin of the "Saint Honoré."

One afternoon when the deep blue haze of the delayed Indian summer hung over the distant hills, they ascended the little look-out platform

that had been the scene of the fatal combat. Renée, after seeing that her patient was comfortably propped against the flagstaff, sat down beside him. Below them lay the Indian lodges, busy with life and activity. All vestiges of the attack had been removed and new bark houses had arisen on the ashes of the old. The sun's rays touched the tops of the distant camps, half hidden in the trees, now gaudy in their multicolored autumn foliage. Far up the river Tonti beheld a solitary canoe, urged onward by some sinewy arm. He thought of the day when his arm, now weak and shrunken, had sent his bark flying over the water to greet Renée on her first arrival, and his mind went back over all the happenings since they had first met, and he marvelled as he thought of the strange interweaving of their lives. A feeling of sadness surged through his breast as he realized the fruitlessness of it all; that only disappointment and a resigned sorrow were left them.

The Chevalier de Baugis approached. "*Bon jour, mon ami,*" he cried. "It does my eyes good to see you able to be about visiting the scenes of your past glories. Now that you are stronger, I have brought a letter for you from La Salle, received whilst you were wandering in the land of dreams." So saying, he handed the missive to Tonti and was gone.

"Are you sure you are well enough to take up such matters?" anxiously queried Renée.

"*Certainement!* However, only with permission of my physician," he replied smilingly.

Her consent gained, Tonti broke the seal and passed his eyes over the pages. From them he learned that La Salle had been obliged to return to France for means whereby to satisfy his creditors. He also read numerous plans and instructions in regard to the colony, but the closing sentences burned before his eyes in letters of fire: "There is one matter about which I have had much anxiety, and that is the exposed position of Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise amid the hardships of the frontier life. I feel in a great measure responsible for her being there. She, undoubtedly, when obliged to flee from France, turned toward the Western World where I was for protection, while I, recreant that I was, found myself unable to meet her and tell her — the truth. Yes, *mon ami*, her bright eyes were alluring whilst I stood in the full blaze of the glory of the court or the delicious serenity of Choisy Mademoiselle, and they indeed stirred what little portion of my heart there remained unfilled by ambitious schemes, and I thought I loved her. But once the smell of the forest and the stream greeted me I realized that I had no room in my life for woman's love, sweet and precious though it might

be to some, but that I was destined for great achievements; deeds of conquest and discovery; deeds wrought out in the solitude of the wilderness or about the council fires of a treacherous foe. For such a one there can be no home, no domestic ties. My heart goes out in pity for her, although it does not throb with love. I trust she will find some one better able to make her happy than I, for she is certainly everything that is good and estimable. Were your affections not already engaged in another direction I could not wish you a greater blessing than that you yourself might win her."

Tonti's hand trembled; a faintness came over him as he realized the full import of the message.

"Have you bad news?" asked Renée, as she noticed his agitation.

"The only news worth living for," was Tonti's reply. He tried to speak further, but his lips were dumb. He who through so many days had schooled his tongue to silence, whose full strength had been needed to keep back in fierce repression the thousand loving words that came rushing to his lips, found when the time came and the seal was removed that the springs of his eloquence were dry. He looked into her eyes, those eyes that had greeted him in maidenly confusion from the depths of the sedan-chair;

that had furtively followed him throughout their later wanderings with a look of secret yearning; those eyes that had gazed upon him in pity throughout his suffering and that he now surprised filled with an ineffable tenderness. And in his look she read the meaning of his words; knew that in some way the barrier had been broken down. He seized her unresisting hand, and at the touch his speech found utterance.

"Renée, my beloved," he whispered gently, "I am free at last to speak and show you all that is in my heart: the hopes, the yearnings, the striving for better things, the struggle against unworthy deeds, and, best and greatest of all, invading and surrounding aught else, filling my heart and brain and life — my love for you. To tell you of its beginning, kindled by the sight of your beauty, the touch of your trembling hand, of its growth and persistence despite my efforts to forget when I found I could not proceed further without dishonor. How greatly it was intensified when I discovered you in this wild land, alone, helpless, and in danger; when I saw your courage and strength mount to meet occasion; when I beheld you, a gentle ministering spirit, and felt the sweet comfort of your tender pitying service. To tell you all will take a lifetime. Ah! *mia cara*, let me hear from your lips

what your blushes, your glance, the pressure of your hand tell me already."

"I love you," murmured Renée; then, as though the sound of her own words gave her courage, she raised her eyes to his and went on more boldly: "I love you, my true, brave knight, and have ever since the days of our earliest meeting. It was for you I wept the bitter tears at your departure; for you I made this flag above us, although, perforce, I handed it to your friend. It was for love of you, when obliged to leave France, that I braved the wild seas and unknown land. For love of you my heart well-nigh broke when I thought you unworthy; for you it beat afresh when I knew you true. Do not think, my love, that I have not seen your trial and struggle. It has been my joy, understanding all, to watch how fine and noble was the strife, how complete the victory. I would not have had you false to La Salle, for in keeping faith with him did you honor me. Nor need you tell me of your love, for I have heard it already. Through the long, dark watches have I listened to your pleadings, to your praise. Night after night have I heard your dear voice continuously murmuring my name; hour after hour have I spent in learning what your ideal was, and oh! my lover, how bitter has been the realization of how far short I come of being that which you believe me to be."

The solitary canoe that Tonti had watched drew near to the landing. Its occupant disembarked and approached the fort. A few moments later the boyish voice of the Sieur de Boisrondet rang across the yard:

"Capitaine Tonti! A messenger from Quebec!" as he quickly approached the lovers on the rampart. "A messenger from Quebec, bringing dispatches! One is for you personally. I thought I would bring it at once. Those pertaining to official business the Chevalier will discuss with you later."

Tonti recognized the scrawling writing of Frontenac on the outside of the large oblong package. He opened it, and out fell a document bearing the royal seal. With it was a letter that read as follows:

"Mon cher Tonti, — I have good news for you. Colbert is dead. The King, no longer under his influence, hastens to make amends for your father's cruel treatment and to reward your bold endeavors for him in the wilds of New France. I send you the royal commission granting you unlimited rights to trade, and appointing you commander-in-chief of all the forces of the King in the Mississippi Valley, together with the powers of Governor (shared in by La Salle) of all additions to the royal domain that by right of settlement or exploration you may acquire. You are to receive a salary of five thousand livres. On the other hand, if you prefer

to return to France, Louis has promised me to create you a Comte and transfer to you the possessions that your enemy Miron fell heir to two months ago by the death of an uncle, and which have been declared forfeited to the crown. My affairs are again hopeful and I expect ere long to be returned to Quebec. Should you ever by any chance meet with the fair *donnée*, convey to her my best desires and give her for me — a fatherly kiss.

"Louis de Buade,

"*Comte de Frontenac.*"

Tonti's mind ran rapidly over the situation; to return meant wealth, honor, the King's favor, and all that he had thought when there worth striving for. To remain meant the giving up of the glittering vanity and polluted pleasures of the court, while there would abide with him the bold, free existence that he now loved; the life work before him of building up the noble fabric of a new realm; — and Renée, she for whom he would have turned aside the proffered riches and honors of the world and thought it cheap.

He handed the letter to her to read and watched her face with a smile of loving tenderness. She finished and looked up. "Your choice, my lord!" she demanded. For answer, Tonti gently drew her to him, and murmuring, "There is but one," fulfilled to his own satisfaction the last request of Frontenac.

He then pulled at a cord fastened about his

neck and drew forth a small, flat object wrapped carefully in oiled silk. He undid it before Renée's wondering eyes and showed her — a tiny bit of lace, a handkerchief crumpled and with a torn border, while clear and distinct as when he first examined it standing on the street of Paris stood forth the embroidered letter "R." She blushed with pleasure as she recognized it, and saw him carry it reverently to his lips, murmuring: "Renée, my Rose!"

The wind was hushed; a silence fell upon the town; the faint rippling of the distant water was scarcely heard; the golden lilies from the summit of the flagstaff looked lovingly down upon these two worthy children of France; the slanting rays of the fast disappearing sun bathed them in its glorious light. Two storm-tossed barks had gained their haven; they had at last found anchorage within the harbor of Peace.

# After-Word

*TO love ardently, to fight bravely, to die game,— these attributes have been held in high esteem by all nations, in all climes, since history began. But we, the children of To-day, are apt to feel ourselves superior to the men of past centuries, believing that in our age the higher qualities of mind and heart, of noble sacrifice, self-restraint, and suffering patiently endured, have caused the flower of modern character to blossom forth in beauty such as past centuries but seldom saw. It is to raise a question as to the correctness of this view that the Author has endeavored to emphasize the fact that all the men of the old time were not merely men of action, men of great vainglorious ideas, of tempestuous natures, swashbuckling soldiers of fortune, gamesters trying odds with Fate, but were in very truth men of like passions with ourselves; beset with like temptations and trials; with the power of circumstances also continually forcing them down stream. Many there were who, according to their lights, bravely battled with great odds and forced their way against the current toward noble ideals and ends, emerging at last victorious, not only masters of men, but masters of themselves. Such were many of those rare hearts who, uncouth in speech, of homely visage, plain and simple in their mode of life, laid for us the foundations of our national greatness and honor. To them we indeed owe much. Let us each one pay to their name and memory a passing thought of admiration and respect.*

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